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LD2209130488 [Editorial Report]

Lebanon

Election Postponement—In a statement broadcast by Beirut radio 22 September, the office of the Chamber of Deputies speaker announced the postponement of the session to elect a new president until 23 September, stressing that this is "to enable all fellow deputies to achieve national reconciliation."

The statement affirmed that the session will be in Al-Najmah Square.

The announcement followed an outbreak of fighting across the East-West Beirut contact lines in which the parliament building in Al-Najmah Square came under shellfire, according to the radio.

Radio Monte Carlo noted that the parliamentary session was adjourned after only a small number of deputies came to the building, none of them from East Beirut.

On the Christian side, President Amin al-Jumayyil began forming a transitional government that will assume constitutional authority if the Chamber of Deputies fails to elect a new president, Radio Monte Carlo noted.

The new government will be headed by Deputy Pierre Hilu and will include Muslim and Christian personalities including General Michel 'Awn, Samir Ja'ja', Walid Junblatt, and Nabih Birri.

Twenty-six Christian deputies earlier held a "c ucial" meeting in Bkirki in which they reaffirmed their determination to boycott the parliamentary session unless it is moved to the Mansur Palace, Voice of Lebanon radio noted.

They authorized the Christian deputy speaker to discuss with the parliament speaker ways of "making it easy for all deputies to participate in the election."

The continuing political crisis followed Al-Jumayyil's talks in Damascus which were "not successful," according to a Christian deputy cited by the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon.

President Hafiz al-Asad insisted on Syria's previous stand, the radio said.

A Damascus television report on the talks stated that the two presidents agreed on the need to exert all possible efforts to facilitate the holding of the presidential election.

Damascus radio noted that Al-Asad also held separate talks with the Lebanese prime minister and parliament speaker and with Mikha'il Dahir, the candidate backed by Syria.

In another development, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' traveled to Jeddah where he gave Saudi King Fahd a message from Al-Asad on the situation in Lebanon, according to Damascus radio.

Assassination of Amal Leaders—Three Amal Movement officials were assassinated by unidentified gunmen in the Al-'Awza'i area of southern Beirut 22 September, Beirut radio announced.

The three victims were Dawud Dawud, Mahmud Faqih, and Al-Hajj Hasan Sbaytah, all members of the Amal Political Bureau.

Iran

Iran is not prepared to accept any form of tampering with the 1975 Algiers agreement "even at the cost of starting the war," Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated in an interview with Tehran radio.

However, he contended that the Iraqis are not serious in their demand for full sovereignty over the waterway as they know Iran will never accept this.

On the clearing of the waterway, he affirmed Iran wants the dredging to be carried out as soon as possible after "there is peace and it is safe," but "now is not the time to raise this issue."

As for the possibility Iraq may divert the course of the Shatt al-'Arab, Rafsanjani said this is "absurd" as the task would be "very difficult."

The Majlis speaker also said the location of the negotiations with Iraq "makes no difference to us" and while Iran prefers that they be held under the UN secretary general's supervision in New York, it has "no objection to Geneva."

Assessing the overall effect of the war, he maintained that despite its destructive consequences, the conflict reinforced Iran's "spiritual strength" and helped promote "technical advancements."

While Iran did not realize its slogan calling for the downfall of the Saddam Husayn regime, it may well attain the same objectives through UN Resolution 598, if it is "implemented correctly."

Asked about the choice of economic policies for reconstruction, Rafsanjani disclosed that "no decision has been taken about this matter."

He confirmed that the "assembly for deciding the expediency" is sounding out views on reconstruction, and pointed out that this is not the same body as the assembly which was established to adjudicate differences between the Council of Guardians and the Majlis.

In another development, Tehran radio announced that Iranian ships, aircraft, and frogmen began minesweeping operations in the northern and southern Gulf 22 September.

Iraq

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sa'dun Hammadi received a "severe dressing down" from British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe over the chemical weapons (CW) issue, PRESS ASSOCIATION noted in a report on their talks in London.

Sir Geoffrey told Hammadi that if reports of CW use against Iraqi Kurds are true, Iraq's action was "barbaric" and inspires "revulsion."

Hammadi, who is on an international tour to explain Iraq's stand on the Gulf war peace talks, reaffirmed Iraq's opposition to allowing a UN team into the country to investigate the allegations.

In Paris, French police arrested over 10 people from a group of "agent terrorists" who had attempted to "storm" the Iraqi Embassy, INA reported.

Baghdad radio announced that over 40,000 Kurds have now returned to Iraq in accordance with the amnesty.

Israel: Occupied Territories

An 18-year-old leader of disturbances in a Gaza Strip refugee camp was shot dead by the IDF, Jerusalem television reported, adding that seven other people were wounded in the incident.

A number of other Arabs were wounded in clashes with the IDF in the West Bank.

In remarks cited by Jerusalem radio, Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said that PLO talk of placing the territories under international control for an interim period is "nonsense" as Israel will remain in the area until a solution is found.

PLO Affairs

PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat described his talks with President Husni Mubarak as "positive and constructive," noting that he briefed the Egyptian leader on the alternatives which the PLO is currently considering, according to MENA.

'Arafat said that "no final decision" has been made regarding a provisional Palestinian government.

Palestinian sources in Baghdad told WAKH the PLO will soon begin moves aimed at convening an Arab summit conference to endorse the announcement of a Palestinian "state."

Afghanistan

The mujahidin bombarded Qandahar Airport 17 September with new rockets that have a 20-mile range, according to resistance sources cited by AFP.

The attack reportedly destroyed 4 aircraft, killed 10 soldiers, and caused severe damage to airport buildings.

Palestinian Affairs

Arab Summit Sought To 'Bless' Palestinian State

JN2109145488 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1230 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Sep (WAKH)—The PLO will soon begin a new political move aimed at discussing the possibility of holding an Arab summit to bless the announcement of a Palestinian state and to pledge to deal with the government which will be run by the PLO.

Reliable Palestinian sources told a WAKH correspondent in Baghdad that this move comes after deciding the issue of the establishment of a Palestinian state during the dialogue which took place among the leaders of the Palestinian groups affiliated with the PLO.

These sources said that the constitution of the new state which is being prepared by the political and legal committee headed by Political Department chief Faruq Qaddumi is about to be finished.

The sources indicated that the dialogue which was held among the Palestinian factions in Tunisia a few days ago centered on the main ideas raised by this committee.

These sources referred to PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat's speech at the European Parliament. They said that the shape of the government has become specified and known to everybody.

'Arafat said in his speech: The PLO works to build an independent Palestinian state on the land liberated from the Israeli occupation. This state will have a republican, democratic, and multiparty system committed to the human rights declaration.

Reliable Palestinian sources affirmed that through its envoys and Yasir 'Arafat's visits, the PLO received Arab support for any step to be taken concerning the declaration of a government or the establishment of a Palestinian state, or any other step the PLO takes in this regard.

The sources said that the PLO also received international sanction represented by the Soviet Union's support and Moscow's assertion of the need to issue a fully clear political program in order to boost the current efforts to hold an international conference, especially after Jordan's disengagement of legal and administrative relations with the occupied West Bank.

These sources believe that Moscow can now exert pressure on Washington in this regard and convince it to accept the idea of an international conference after the PLO has become the only side representing the Palestinian people.

These sources see that the PNC emergency session will most likely be held in Algeria during the first half of next month. They said that the period which will precede the PNC meetings will be full of Palestinian activity on Arab and international levels, especially after the success of 'Arafat's visit to Strasbourg and his contacts with the European states in this regard.

Abu Sharif Interviewed on PLO Peace Stand

TA1609111388 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Sep 88 p 4

["Excerpts" of an interview with PLO spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif by Michel Zlotowski, also attended by Marwan Kanafani, following Yasir 'Arafat's address to the European Parliament; in Strasbourg on 14 September]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Abu Sharif: I don't know what the members of the Parliament were expecting, but many of them reacted very positively. Many of them got a very clear idea of the serious and committed stand of the PLO to the establishment of peace.

I am sure that 'Arafat's speech clarified the political stand of the PLO on many issues that are still regarded by some political powers as unclarified.

For example, to take up one issue: I heard several (Israeli) Labour Party leaders, during the beginning of their election campaign, impose on the PLO conditions such as the recognition of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Chairman 'Arafat has said very clearly that he accepts 242 and 338. Now the European Parliament is a witness.

So whenever Shim'on Peres will come and say "They'll have to recognize 242 and 338," the European Parliament can tell him: "They did!" I know and you know, too, that 'Arafat already said that before. We are accepting all of the UN resolutions.

JP: Does that include the resolutions of the General Assembly too?

Abu Sharif: Let's not get into semantics. If there is a real intention to establish peace, the formula is very clear and very simple.

The Palestinians accept 242 and 338 and at the same time they expect others to accept their right to self-determination. So all resolutions that call for this right should be included among Resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for a settlement and for the establishment of peace.

JP: What about the PLO Charter?

Abu Sharif: Let me tell you this. The covenant was drafted before this leadership of the PLO was elected. The PLO has a programme, the same way any party which would hope to win the elections in Israel has its programme. We do not open old files, for example, the files of Herut, the backbone of one of the partners of the actual government. We don't talk about their anthem "From the Nile to the Euphrates." (sic).

We don't talk about the ideas of expansionism put forward by certain people in the ruling circles like Sharon. We are talking about a political solution that deals with the occupied West Bank and Gaza and that deals with realities that the Palestinians are seeing now very clearly and realities that have, unfortunately, not been seen by the ruling government in Israel until now.

The Palestinians resist occupation because they want their freedom, they want to establish their own independent state and not destroy another people's state.

JP: Including Israel?

Abu Sharif: Including Israel.

JP: The PLO no longer wishes to destroy Israel?

Abu Sharif: The PLO has never said it wanted to destroy Israel. I hope that people who talk a lot about 242 will read it. The people who talk about the Covenant should read it too, because the covenant doesn't speak about the destruction of Israel. But I am not dealing here with the covenant, I consider that the political programme of the PLO is the only paper to which we are committed. We are dealing with realities.

The reality is that the Israelis have chosen the (actual) political forces to rule them, by elections. We want to negotiate with them.

JP: Do you mean to say that the PLO covenant is outdated?

Abu Sharif: I meant what I said. I don't want to talk about the charter, frankly.

JP: But every time you will meet with an Israeli, he will talk to you about the covenant, because in his eyes it is one of the main obstacles to discussions with the PLO.

Abu Sharif: Yasir 'Arafat made clear and said in front of hundreds of parliamentarians that he is holding out his hand for peace and he is waiting for a courageous Israeli leader to sit down and talk and negotiate peace and that he is for the establishment of a Palestinian state and not for destroying others. He is very clear on that.

JP: Are you ready to define the borders of the Palestinian state you are talking about?

Abu Sharif: I think that this is the point which should be left for negotiations. The principal point from which we can start this process of peace-making in the Middle East is the acceptance by the occupier of withdrawal, of the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people and the acceptance by the PLO of the resolutions that ensure security, safety of borders and sovereignty for Israel.

JP: In that order?

Abu Sharif: No, not necessarily; on an equal basis. Because if Peres would come out and say "I am for the right of self-determination for the Palestinians"—we are saying that we are for 242 and 338 and the right for self-determination—I think this is a starting point.

JP: What if Shamir says that?

Abu Sharif: Frankly speaking, I am not differentiating between the two, although there are some differences. But regarding the national rights of the Palestinian people, up to now I cannot distinguish them.

The fascist measures that are being used against our people, in the West Bank and Gaza, are being decided by both and implemented by both. I don't say "Shamir" or "Peres," but whoever will be elected by the Israelis. Because he will be representative of the Israelis the same way the PLO is the representative of the Palestinians.

I do not allow the Israelis or the Americans or the Jordanians to choose for our people who represents them. In the same way, I don't allow myself to choose for the Israelis who represents them.

We are ready to deal with any representatives of the Israelis who are courageous enough to sit and talk and negotiate peace.

JP: Do you think this will be the outcome of the coming extraordinary session of the PNC?

Abu Sharif: What I have just said is based on resolutions of the National Council because what I have said did not deal with the mechanism or with the apparatus of achieving the peace.

We have taken a clear stand calling for this in the context of negotiations in an international conference which will have as participants all the sides concerned, Israel, PLO and others, plus the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. This has a logic.

Some of the Israeli politicians try to mislead the Israelis by saying that a Palestinian state will be a threat to Israel. "If we allow a Palestinian state on our borders, it will mean that the next day you will have terrorists and terrorist action against Israel. They would be too close to us" and so on. They are misleading the Israelis and mobilizing them psychologically in the wrong direction because they have their own aims, political aims, which are definitely against the establishment of peace in the region.

We say "the five permanent members of the UN Security Council" for two reasons. One reason is the guarantee of the security of Israel. These states are supposed to give an international guarantee for security and secure borders.

Second, it is for the security of our state, because we are the ones who are afraid of the gigantic military machine of Israel, of the nuclear power of Israel. And therefore, when we have this international forum, the five can definitely guarantee the security of our state and of the State of Israel.

JP: How can you say that the five permanent members of the UN can be a guarantee? The UN has never succeeded in preventing a war or an act of aggression.

Abu Sharif: I didn't say the UN. I said the five permanent members of the Security Council.

JP: Don't you think that direct talks would be much more fruitful than going through all this international conference business?

Abu Sharif: The PLO wants to negotiate with Israel. Do you think we are going to an international conference to talk to King Husayn? Or to negotiate with France or with the United States? We want to go to an international conference to negotiate with Israel.

The five permanent members of the Security Council are the countries that are able to supply Israel or Palestine with arms. Their presence, their signature on the agreement should be respected, but I agree with you that the basis remains the respect of the agreement by the two main parties to the conflict, independent Palestine and Israel.

JP: Does that mean that if Israel would agree to have direct talks with you, you would renounce the international conference?

Abu Sharif: I didn't say that, because until now we see that the international conference is the best way of getting the wheels of peace to move. The Knesset's decision stating that no (Israeli) government is allowed to negotiate the future of the West Bank before a general plebiscite is still in force.

Until now, all the efforts of the PLO to push forward a peacemaking process in the Middle East have received only a rejection from the Israeli government and also to a certain extent from some other international circles.

JP: What is Yasir 'Arafat's position now within the Palestinian movement? What is the strength of people like Abu Musa [Sa'id Musa Muraghah] and Ahmad Jibril?

Abu Sharif: In April 1987 Yasir 'Arafat was unanimously elected at the last PNC meeting as chairman of the PLO. The only one who did not vote was 'Arafat himself.

The small groups controlled by the Syrians, Abu Musa and Jibril, have been known for a long time as Syrian puppets. They are not considered by the Palestinian people as Palestinian organizations.

'Arafat, who started as leader of Fatah and then leader of the PLO, is now the leader of the Palestinians. There are thousands of Palestinians all through the world and in particular inside the occupied territories who are not members of the (PLO) organization, but who regard the PLO as their national identity, and who consider Yasir 'Arafat to be their leader.

JP: If 'Arafat is recognized by his own people in such a way, why are there so many difficulties in convening the PNC?

Abu Sharif: This extraordinary session is going to deal with an historic issue. Our Central Committee has decided to prepare this session in a very scientific way by drafting all the papers necessary on the issue to be discussed.

All the ad-hoc committees have remitted their papers, and now it is up to the Executive Committee to decide the proper timing, not because of disputes or differences, but to achieve the best effect on the Palestinians, on the regional and on the international level.

JP: The date of the PNC has not been set yet?

Abu Sharif: It has.

JP: So, when?

Abu Sharif: I am not in a position to say when.

Marwan Kanafani: It will be at the beginning of October.

JP: Is it wise to hold the PNC session before the elections both in Israel and in the United States?

Abu Sharif: I don't mean that Israeli elections are not important to us. We are following every single speech of your campaign. We are following what is happening in the United States but these events do not influence the decision on when to convene the PNC.

JP: Will the intifada [uprising] go on?

Abu Sharif: The intifada will go on because resistance to occupation will continue until the occupation will cease.

JP: What about the terrorist attacks inside the Green Line?

Abu Sharif: Military operations that have been carried out against Israel, the Israeli army, will definitely continue as an act of resistance.

JP: I was asking you about terrorist attacks on civilians, like in Haifa.

(At this point, Abu Sharif turned to Kanafani and asked in Arabic who claimed responsibility for the Haifa terrorist attack.)

Abu Sharif: The Dimona operation was PLO. Haifa was Jibril. Dimona was an attack against the nuclear plant. That reactor produces the nuclear warheads of Israel.

But Israel is not respecting the Declaration of Cairo (1985 undertaking to Egypt by 'Arafat not to attack targets outside Israel and the occupied territories): the assassination of Abu Jihad [Khalil al-Wazir], of three PLO cadres in Limassol, the bombing of the "Ship of Return," the assassination of other cadres in Athens.

It is said clearly by many Israeli officials that they will continue their operation against the PLO headquarters and leadership. Why do you expect the PLO to remain silent?

'Arafat said in Strasbourg that the PLO will remain committed to the Cairo Declaration until the PLO decides otherwise, maybe as a reaction to the Israeli attitude of no respect for this declaration.

JP: What would you consider to be a significant Israeli enough gesture [as published] for the PLO to call a halt to the intifada?

Abu Sharif: Judging from the Israeli official response to the PLO peace offers, this hypothesis is not realistic. Intifada is resistance to the occupation. If Israel announces its withdrawal from the West Bank and from Gaza, there will be no need to continue the intifada.

JP: What would Israel get in exchange for its withdrawal?

Abu Sharif: A negotiated peace, an international guarantee for peace and security. We will be ready to accept UN forces on the borders if this would make the Israeli Government feel better.

JP: King Husayn's decision (to sever the administrative links with the West Bank) has surprised 'Arafat. Did it put the PLO in a difficult position?

Abu Sharif: It has increased the burden of our people under occupation. The PLO did not hesitate to step in and fill the gap by taking all the responsibilities.

JP: Do you resent the King's decision?

Abu Sharif: The central council has said that we will keep our contacts with the King.

JP: In this new situation, does Jordan remain a party to the conflict? In case of an international peace conference, for instance?

Abu Sharif: Jordan has a part of its territory occupied by Israel, according to his majesty, near the 'Arava Valley. That would make Jordan a party to the international peace conference on this particular issue.

But the "Jordanian option" which some people have been calling for, is over. Now there is the PLO, and only the PLO.

Egypt

Further on Yasir 'Arafat Visit to Cairo

Received by Mubarak 21 Sep

NC2109161488 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1604 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Cairo, 21 Sep (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received at the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis this evening PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, who arrived in Cairo today.

Talks 'Positive and Fruitful'

NC2109195788 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1922 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Cairo, 21 Sep (MENA)—Palestinian sources have described President Husni Mubarak's talks with PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat as positive and fruitful.

The sources said that the talks dealt with the latest developments in the Middle East situation in light of current Arab and international events.

Further on 'Arafat Remarks

NC2109214288 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2117 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Cairo, 21 Sep (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has stated that the talks he held today with President Husni Mubarak were positive and constructive and dealt with a number of important issues, including recent developments in the Palestinian arena in the wake of the Jordanian decision to break off administrative and legal ties with the occupied West Bank.

In remarks to newsmen following his meeting with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and Dr 'Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, 'Arafat said he sensed that President Mubarak cares a great deal about improving Arab relations, particularly Jordanian-Palestinian ties, in order that the Arab nation may confront the challenges facing it.

'Arafat said that he and President Mubarak also discussed the situation in the Gulf region and the establishment of peace in the area. They stressed the importance of establishing a comprehensive peace between Iraq and Iran on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 598 so that Iraq, which has defended the eastern gate of the Arab nation, can contribute to the attainment of peace on the Palestinian front.

'Arafat said that no final decision has been made regarding a provisional Palestinian government. He informed President Mubarak about the alternatives which the PLO is considering, he said.

The Palestinian leader affirmed that during his European tour which begins tomorrow President Mubarak will make every effort to achieve a comprehensive, just, and permanent peace in the area. He will take into consideration Palestinian political rights, the most important of which are the right to return, the right to self-determination, and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state, he said.

Asked whether he had requested President Mubarak's support as he begins to establish a provisional Palestinian government, 'Arafat said: I do not have to make such requests from President Mubarak. President Mubarak is a brother and he cares for the Palestinian issue as much as he cares for Egyptian issues. This is not the first time that President Mubarak has made such a tour and undertaken such efforts for the benefit of the Palestinian people. These tours and efforts also serve the interest of the Egyptian people and the Arab nation.

'Arafat said he is optimistic regarding the important changes which are taking place in connection with the Palestinian issue. He said: Our people will finally find a solution that will place them on their land.

'Arafat affirmed that the uprising in the occupied territories is on the way to reaping its fruits when the Palestinian flag is raised over Jerusalem, God willing.

Responding to a question about French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas' remarks in which he said that 'Arafat is prepared to recognize Israel, the Palestinian leader said: My talks with Dumas were clear. He posed this question, and I was frank with him. I affirmed to him what the PLO and the Arab summit in Fes announced.

'Arafat declared that he is ready to negotiate directly with Israel within the framework of an international peace conference.

'Arafat pointed out that the PNC will meet very soon, and that this meeting has nothing to do with the American elections.

Asked whether he will carry specific proposals from 'Arafat to U.S. President Ronald Reagan, Dr 'Abd al-Majid said: We talked about all the subjects that we consider important and that will assist us to draw up our views in the future.

Departs Cairo 22 Sep

NC2209062488 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Cairo, 22 Sep (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat departed from Cairo early this morning following a 1-day visit to Cairo, during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak.

During their talks, 'Arafat and Mubarak had reviewed possible Palestinian moves in the forthcoming stage with the aim of winning European support for the next Palestinian step after the PNC meeting.

'Arafat also held talks with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, who explained Egypt's views regarding the need for Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation in the forthcoming stage.

Mubarak Leaves for SFRY, European Countries
NC2209073088 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0722 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Cairo, 22 Sep (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and his wife left Cairo this morning for Belgrade on a visit to the SFRY on the first leg of a tour of the United Kingdom, France, and the FRG.

This tour falls within the framework of his excellency's efforts to consolidate Egypt's economy and initiate moves in the international arena to boost the peace process in the Middle East as well as the peace talks between Iraq and Iran.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi on Gulf, Arab Unity, Domestic Issues
JN2109125988 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1030 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Al-Shariqah, 21 Sep (WAKH)—Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi has called for formulating an Arab initiative to contribute to achieving peace between Iraq and Iran in the ongoing negotiations between the two countries. He expressed his country's readiness to play any role within this framework.

In a statement to AL-KHALIJ published here today, the Libyan leader noted that Libya exerted many efforts to convince Iran to accept Security Council Resolution No 598 and that these efforts will be announced when time comes.

With regard to the Arab union plan announced by Libya at the Algiers summit, the Libyan leader said that most of the Arab countries sent positive responses to him, welcoming the idea in terms of form and political framework.

He ruled out any contradiction between this plan and what is being discussed on the level of Maghreb cooperation which produced a number of committees to achieve integral unity on solid scientific and economic bases.

The Libyan leader called on the United States not to interfere in the Lebanese presidential elections. He described this interference as preparation for its interference in any similar situation in any other Arab country.

Col al-Qadhdhafi called on the Arab countries to define their stand vis-a-vis the international community in light of world countries' stands on the Palestinian issue.

He said that the Arab countries should boycott America, withdraw Arab accounts, and boycott the imperialist countries which have relations with Israel.

He also called for opening the borders adjacent to Palestine for fedayeen operations; adopting a decision to close the Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb, and other waterways to Israel; and besieging Israel economically.

In his statement to AL-KHALIJ, the Libyan leader said that his country considers the cause of the Irish people a just one.

However, he added, his country condemns all military operations against civilian targets. He also noted that his country asked the Chadian warring parties to achieve reconciliation.

Col al-Qadhdhafi reviewed some domestic issues in Libya. He said the Libyan revolution wants to change the world, not only the Libyan situation.

He denied the existence of problems in the man-made river plan that will be implemented later.

He also denied the existence of a plan to build seven dams on the Nile in Ethiopia in cooperation with the USSR.

On the issue of the continental shelf, Col al-Qadhdhafi said that Libya began digging and exploring [for oil] in the Al-Buri area on the shelf and spent billions of dollars to build platforms. It was difficult for Libya and Tunisia to split the plan between them after the International Court issued its decision.

He added that Libya has decided, in light of this, to compensate Tunisia by digging another field to be called the 7 November Field after Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's movement.

The production of this field and what follows it will be split equally with Tunisia.

Bahrain

ARAB TIMES Interviews Amir on Gulf Security

JN1909141088 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 18 Sep 88 p 4

[By Ahmad al-Jarallah]

[Excerpts] The Gulf war has ended and the people of this region have started adapting themselves to the new era of peace, Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah, the Amir of Bahrain, said in an interview.

He also said that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states will have to organise themselves in a better and stronger manner now.

"Unifying internal affairs, economic and political forces will enable us to march foward. We have already passed a dangerous turning point in the Iran-Iraq war with the news of peace," he said.

"We in Bahrain practised our true principles concerning this war. Our brothers in Iraq felt that we are a state with principles, in spite of the fact that the price was expensive. But this price had to be paid for keeping and practising our principles. We thank the brothes of Iraq for understanding our position, which was meant only to strengthen Arab unity," he said.

"We also wanted this to reflect itself on the relations between Iraq and the states of the region—away from all tensions. Iraq while rejoicing in its victory, will be a parallel force for the GCC states. The important issue here is that we should feel that we are capable of becoming a united force in the face of other world blocs," Shaykh 'Isa said.

Discussing the affairs of the GCC states, the Amir of Bahrain said that during the next GCC summit meeting in December, "we will sort out unsolved issues between the GCC member states in a spirit of brotherhood, truth and tranquility."

"The rearrangement of the Gulf home and the creation of a moral power among the GCC member states means the creation of a strong economic alliance, and it will also mean that we become an international political and moral force that will march ahead collectively with confidence and ability," he said.

"The world of today is a world of interest-oriented alliances. We here in the GCC states with the economic power that we own, need nothing more than organisation," he said.

"The GCC states, through an efficient organisation of what they have of economic and political force, can move in the world arena in a more positive and effective way". [passage omitted]

Bahrain, while preparing to host the next GCC summit in December this year, should provide an atmosphere conducive towards achieving good results from this meeting", he said.

"We want the December summit to become the meeting that strongly pushes forward the GCC alliance, through frankness among members that should help to organise the Gulf home in a better way," he said. [passage omitted]

Iraqi Foreign Minister Arrives With Message

JN2009170488 Manama WAKH in English 1635 GMT 20 Sep 88

[Text] Manama, Sep 20 (GNA)—Iraqi Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz arrived here this evening from Kuwait on a two-day visit to Bahrain as part of a regional tour.

'Aziz will convey a message to H.H. [His Highness] the Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn.

He was received by Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mubarak al Khalifah.

Delivers Message to Amir

JN2109084488 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0800 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Manama, 21 Sep (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain, has received a message from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn dealing with bilateral relations and developments in current negotiations between Iraq and Iran to bring about peace in the region.

Tariq 'Aziz, Iraqi deputy prime minister and foreign minister, conveyed the message when he was received by his highness in Manama this morning.

Following the meeting, the Iraqi minister said that he expressed to his highness, Iraq's appreciation for Bahrain's support for Iraq during the war. He also hailed Bahrain's political and moral support for Iraq to achieve its just demands in the peace negotiations.

Regarding his talks with Bahraini Foreign Minister Muhammad ibn Mubarak Al Khalifah, Tariq 'Aziz said that the talks centered on current developments in the region and views on issues of common interest to both countries.

Departs for YAR

JN2109104588 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0828 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Manama, 21 Sep (WAKH)—Tariq 'Aziz, Iraqi deputy prime minister and foreign minister, left Manama for Sanaa this morning after a 1-day visit to Bahrain as part of his current tour of a number of countries in the region.

During the visit, 'Aziz conveyed a message to His Highness Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain, from President Saddam Husayn.

'Aziz was seen off at the airport by Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mubarak Al Khalifah and Egyptian Ambassador to Bahrain Taha Mahmud al-Qaysi.

Kuwait

Decree Lifts 21-Year Ban on Coca-Cola

JN2009130488 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 19 Sep 88 p 1

[Excerpt] Kuwait yesterday joined three other Gulf Arab states in lifting a 21-year-old ban on Coca-Cola despite an Arab decision to keep it on a blacklist for its dealings with Israel.

A decree by Kuwait's Boycott of Israel Office, published yesterday in the official gazette, KUWAIT AL-YAWM, said the ban was lifted after the U.S.-based firm "proved its good intentions and promised not to make proscribed relations with Israel in the future."

It did not elaborate on what commitments Coca-Cola had made. U.S. law forbids cooperation with the boycott.

A spokesman for the boycott headquarters in Damascus said yesterday Coca-Cola, the world's largest manufacturer of carbonated beverages, was still on the blacklist. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Syria's Al-Shar' Delivers Message, Departs

JN2109185888 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1815 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Jeddah—Saudi Monarch King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz received at the Royal Palace this afternoon Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', who conveyed to the Saudi monarch a message from President Hafiz al-Asad, on the current situation in the region, particularly the situation in Lebanon. Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi foreign minister, attended the meeting.

The foreign minister returned to Damascus this evening. He was seen off at Jeddah Airport by Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, senior Saudi officials, and the Syrian consul.

AL-RIYAD Criticizes Anti-Iraq Campaign

PM2109112388 Riyadh AL-RIYAD in Arabic 17 Sep 88 pp 1, 17

[Editorial: "Iraq and Battle of Political Blackmail"]

[Text] The purpose of accusing Iraq of using chemical weapons against the Kurds remains a political necessity, the objective being to ease the pressure exerted by world public opinion regarding Israel's excesses in the occupied territories and its violations of internationally recognized morality, as well as regards protecting the Palestinians from physical liquidation, the demolition of their homes, and the economic and military siege imposed by the Zionist force on the struggling Arab people.

The political blackmail, which we are accustomed to during U.S. elections, is both important and vital for the candidates so that they can appease the Israeli lobby and divert the attention of U.S. public opinion from a more important conflict, namely, maintaining peace in the Gulf region.

If Israel has been able to succeed in this game, the accusation also serves the other front in Iran. At any rate, Iraq, which has achieved victory in the region's fiercest war in 50 years, cannot accept dishonorable intentions aimed at achieving objectives which ignore Iraq's rights, including internal security rights and the elimination of all pockets that are loyal to the enemies.

So, the problem is that the serious attempts to emasculate Iraq's victory are still a firm objective in any U.S.-Israeli equation. Proof of this is that the unbalanced U.S. stands are manifold. They do not conceal the intention to continue to make Israel master of the situation and to treat it as an ally.

Thus, the accusation leveled against Iraq is a service for world Zionism and a maneuver or flirtation with Iran by another party.

Even if we allow that there is good intent and assume that the United States is seeking to realize the principle of justice in terms of human dealings, it will not be able to dissociate itself from many violations in the world.

Even its definite dealings with Israel and South Africa, as well as its direct interference in the inflamed regions of South America, Africa, and elsewhere, makes the U.S. role unclean or unbalanced.

Thus, we say that because Iraq now constitutes an important Arab force within the framework of settlements and confrontations with Iran and Israel, all counterforces are trying to deny it this privilege. That is why the Arab response has been both swift and positive.

If U.S. and European appeasements are mounted at the expense of the independence and freedom of Iraq's political decisionmaking, they are unacceptable.

Thus, it is not in the interest of the United States to ignite a new fire via the region's conflicts, especially when it claims to desire regional settlements and the elimination of crises and historical differences.

Anyhow, the Iraqi position is firm and continuing. And the storm will have no effect on its inclinations or constituent parts, because the battle front is much bigger than any marginal political issue that has nothing to do with the truth.

Hammadi on Talks With Howe, 'Fabricated Campaign'
JN2209071588 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2050 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] London, 21 Sep (INA)—Sa'dun Hammadi, minister of state for foreign affairs, met with British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe in London today. They discussed issues of interest to the Iraqi and British sides, U.S. claims that Iraq used chemical weapons against Kurdish rebels, developments in the negotiations between Iraq and Iran in Geneva, and bilateral relations.

In a statement to the INA correspondent in London, Sa'dun Hammadi said he explained to the British foreign secretary Iraq's view on the fundamental problems that must be solved in order to achieve a lasting peace between Iran and Iraq and the obstacles that the Iranian side has placed in the way of the Geneva negotiations.

Hammadi said he explained that Iraq firmly supports the implementation of Security Council Resolution No 598 correctly and with good intentions.

Hammadi added that he explained the objectives of the campaign launched by Zionist elements in the United States against Iraq and the motives for the campaign.

He emphasized that there is no basis for such a campaign. He said it lacks evidence and there is no justification for it.

Hammadi said they discussed bilateral relations and the possibility of developing them following the end of the war on the basis of equality and noninterference in internal affairs. Hammadi said: The meeting was useful in clarifying our position on fundamental issues at the Geneva negotiations.

In an interview with ITN on British television Channel 4 Sa'dun Hammadi, minister of state for foreign affairs, affirmed that the Kurds in Iraq enjoy their full rights and are well treated.

Hammadi said that a small group of Kurdish terrorists are seeking seccession in northern Iraq. He said the group cooperated with the Iranian forces to occupy northern Iraq.

Sa'dun Hammadi referred to the Americans' failure to furnish any proof for the allegation that Iraq used chemical weapons.

He said that Redman, U.S. State Department official spokesman, claimed there is evidence but when asked to provide such evidence he said he could not do so.

Hammadi emphasized that Iraq will not allow an international team into Iraq to investigate these allegations because that would be interference in Iraq's internal affairs.

However, he said, Iraq allowed a large number of journalists to visit northern Iraq and to talk to the inhabitants of the region.

Hammadi accused the Zionist lobby of being behind the fabricated campaign against Iraq because the Zionists cannot bear to see Iraq victorious.

Reportage on Visit by Tunisian Prime Minister

Arrives 20 Sep
JN2009190188 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Sep 88

[Text] Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Baccouche arrived in Baghdad this evening at the head of a delegation on a several-day visit to Iraq.

He was received by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister; RCC member Hasan 'Ali; a number of ministers; secretary of the foreign ministry, and the Tunisian ambassador in Baghdad.

The Tunisian prime minister told INA that he carries a message to President Saddam Husayn from his brother President Zine El Abidine Ben 'Ali. He said the visit provides an opportunity for him to express the joy that overwhelmed the Tunisian president, government, and people for the great victory scored by fraternal Iraq, thanks to the boldness of its soldiers, the faithfulness of its strugglers, and the courage and wisdom of its leadership.

He added: What had happened on the Iraqi border over 8 years was for the sake of Arabism. The victory of Iraq is a victory for all Arabs. The martyrs that fell during the war were martyrs of Arabism and Islam.

Baccouche said that Tunisia, as it was during and before the war, will fully support Iraq, which is today fighting for peace, as it fought during the war for victory. He said that Tunisia supports Iraq in its fight for peace and its consolidation.

He added: Campaigns of distortion, whose source and aim we know, will not obstruct this support. These campaigns, he said, are aimed at harming Iraq, maintaining tension, and nourishing sedition.

In his statement to INA, the Tunisian prime minister expressed confidence that Iraq, which succeeded in the war, will succeed in achieving peace. He pointed out that his visit will provide an opportunity for advancing bilateral cooperation between Iraq and Tunisia, in addition to the exchange of views on all issues of common concern to the two brotherly countries.

The delegation accompanying Mr Hedi Baccouche comprises Sadok Rabah, minister of energy and minerals; Moncef Moualhi, minister of equipment and housing; Mohamed Jihan, head of the Arab Department at the Foreign Ministry; and a number of officials.

Conveys Message to President

JN2109105388 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0948 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Sep (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has received Tunisian Prime Ministrer Hedi Baccouche, who conveyed to the president an oral message from Tunisian President Zine El Abidine expressing his congratulations and those of the Tunisian people on the splendid victory achieved by Iraq as well as Tunisia's pride in this great Arab victory.

During the meeting, they discussed the brotherly and close relations between the two fraternal countries as well as joint Arab action. The meeting was attended by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy Prime minister; and the president's secretary.

Begins 'Official' Talks

JN2109131088 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1135 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Sep (INA)—The official talks between Iraq and Tunisia began in Baghdad today. The Iraqi side was led by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister. The Tunisian side was led by Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Baccouche.

At the beginning of the session, Ramadan expressed great optimism about the prosperous future awaiting the brotherly relations between Iraq and Tunisia in all fields.

Ramadan hailed sisterly Tunisia's stand in supporting and backing Iraq in its war with Iran and in confronting the aggressive campaign launched against it by the imperialist and Zionist circles, which have been disturbed by Iraq's victories and Iran's defeat after failing to achieve its ambitions in Iraq.

He affirmed that Iraq, having foiled the Iranian aggression over 8 years, will defend its land and rights and thwart the Iranian rulers' policy of maneuvering in the Geneva negotiations.

In a similar speech, Hedi Baccouche said that the victories achieved by the sons of Iraq are a great achievement for the Arab nation in its modern history. He said Iraq is a new, powerful, advanced, and capable force confronting the plots posed to the Arab nation.

He reiterated fraternal Tunisia's support—president, leadership, and people—for Iraq to achieve a just and honorable peace. He affirmed that Tunisia is serious about the promotion of its relations with Iraq. He expressed pride with the advanced level reached by the bilateral relations.

The talks were attended on the Iraqi side by Finance Minister Hikmat 'Umar Mukhalif, Oil Minister 'Isam 'Abd al-Rahim, Housing and Construction Minister Tahir Muhammad Hassun, Minister of State Arshad al-Zibari, and the Iraqi ambassador in Tunis.

The talks were attended on the Tunisiain side by Sadok Rabah, minister of energy and minerals; Moncef Moualhi, minister of equipment and housing; Mohamed Jihan, head of the Arab Department at the Foreign Ministry; and a number of officials.

Earlier, Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, received Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Baccouche.

Ramadan and Baccouche expressed satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations in all fields.

Tunisian Energy Minister Meets Counterpart

JN2209115488 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1050 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Sep (INA)—Oil Minister 'Isam 'Abd al-Rahim met here today with Tunisian Energy and Minerals Minister Sadok Rabah. During the meeting—attended by the Oil Ministry undersecretary and the Tunisian ambassador in Baghdad—discussions focused on how to promote cooperation between the two fraternal countries in the oil industry field.

Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih has also met with Tunisian Energy and Minerals Minister Sadok Rabah. During the meeting, they reviewed relations of economic and trade cooperation between the two fraternal countries and ways to enhance them.

It is noteworthy that Sadok Rabah is currently visiting Iraq as a member of the delegation accompanying Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Bacchouche.

Telecommunications Official on Israeli Satellite

JN2109163888 Baghdad INA in English 1615 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, Sept 21, INA—Mr. 'Abd al-Jabbar Hasan Khalaf, secretary-general of the Arab Federation for Telecommunications called upon the Arab nation to deal through a national and scientific awareness, with the Zionist entity's launching of its satellite dedicated for espionage purposes.

In a statement to INA, Mr. Khalaf said that launching of this satellite represents a desperate Zionist attempt to boost morale inside the Zionst entity as a result to the Palestinian uprising and impotency in confronting it and also to deal with the state entiling Iran's forcible succumbing to Security Council Resolution No. 598.

He said that information row that accompanied the launching of the Zionist satellite was not justified because the technology and data available in the United States were used in launching it.

He added that the Arab Federation for Telecommunications would continue efforts for facing dangers that could be caused by the Zionist satellite system on those of "Arabsat" and "Intelsat".

Chief Delegate Addresses IAEA Conference

JN2009164388 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1450 GMT 20 Sep 88

[Excerpts] Vienna, 20 Sep (INA)—Iraq has expressed its strong indignation for the continuation of cooperation between certain signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Zionist entity in a way that enhances this entity's nuclear capability and provides political cover for its activities.

Dr Rahim 'Abd al-Katil, head of the Iraqi delegation to the 32d IAEA conference, said in an address to the conference today that Iraq feels bitterness over the failure of some parties to the said treaty to condemn, as dictated by their commitments, the armed and pre-meditated Israeli act of aggression against the Iraqi nuclear plant in June 1981. It also feels bitterness over the failure of these parties to adopt strong and deterrent stands that would prevent the repetition of such aggression.

He added that the Iraqi delegation is also unsatisfied with the method in which the IAEA General Secretariat responded to the general conference resolution, the Security Council resolution, and the General Assembly's resolutions that called on the Zionist entity to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA supervision.

It is ironic, he said, that instead of complying with the the aforementioned resolutions, the Zionist entity is seeking to obtain political gains at the expense of the states of the region and to impose its will on the international community.

Dr 'Abd al-Katil said that the Zionists still deny the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their firm right to self-determination and the establishment of their state on their soil. The expansionist aggressive Zionist regime is still occupying wide Arab territories including Jerusalem. Nevertheless, it seeks to bargain and achieve political gains through its threats of nuclear capability.

He warned that measures to protect and cover up the Zionist military nuclear activities constitute a terrifying threat to the system of nuclear non-proliferation in the region, with the real danger to peace and security this may have. The Zionist entity and those who provide cover for its activities should bear the responsibility of the dire consequences that will result from this. [passage omitted]

The head of the Iraqi delegation touched on the war with Iran saying that the war failed to achieve one of its major goals; namely, blocking the movement of progress and development in Iraq.

Rapid efforts continued in all fields, with Iraq scoring tangible achievements on the levels of administrative, economic, scientific, medical, and social organization, he said.

He said that Iraq, which sincerely and seriously sought to end the war and restore comprehensive and just peace, will continue to seek, with the same seriousness and sincerity, to consolidate the foundations of peace on clear and firm bases, that would guarantee its continuation and durability and safeguard it against future possibilities. [passage omitted]

New Tanker Joins Fleet Transporting Crude Oil

JN2209092088 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Sep (INA)—The Iraqi oil tanker "Baba Karkar" has joined the fleet which transports Iraqi crude oil from the southern ports overlooking the Arabian Gulf.

A responsible Iraqi source told INA that the tanker crossed the Strait of Hormuz en route to Iraqi territorial waters today, Thursday, to carry a shipment of Iraqi crude oil to world ports.

"Baba Karkar," the name of an oilfield in the Al-Ta'mim Governorate, is the second oil tanker to transport Iraqi crude oil after the tanker "'Ayn Zalah" which has been continuing its voyages since 20 August, the day when Iraqi-Iranian cease-fire went into effect to pave the way for direct negotiations to end the war.

"Ayn Zalah" transported the first shipment to the port of Aden. Its second voyage began last Friday, carrying 21,000 tonnes of Iraqi crude oil. It has crossed the Strait of Hormuz en route to the port of Aden.

Number of Returning Kurds Rises to 40,613

JN2109193188 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] The number of those benefiting from the RCC comprehensive amnesty decision rose to 40,613 citizens since the issuance of the decision on 6 September.

The number is divided as follows: 9,719 women, 20,228 childern, 9,699 men, and 967 old men.

UNIIMOG Commander Arrives in Baghdad 21 Sep

JN2109181188 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1638 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Sep (INA)—General Slavko Jovic, commander of the UN Iraq-Iran Military Observers Group, arrived in Baghdad this afternoon.

Indian Minister Arrives To Attend Festival

JN2109180088 Baghdad INA in English 1610 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, Sept 21, INA—Mr. K. Tiwari, Indian state minister for foreign affairs arrived here today leading a delegation to attend the 2nd International Babylon Festival opening tomorrow.

The Indian minister, speaking to INA, said the visit comes in response to an invitation from the Ministry of Culture and Information and that he would have talks with officials here on boosting bilateral relations and seeking new prospects for developing them.

He said that India is keen over strengthening relations of friendship and cooperation with Iraq to whom it harbours all respect.

Newspapers Continue 'Fierce Attacks' on U.S.

JN1909101888 Baghdad INA in English 0930 GMT 19 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, Sept. 19, INA—Iraqi newspapers today continued fierce attacks on the United States and the U.S. Senate decision to impose economic sanctions against Iraq on the alleged use of chemical weapons.

The Iraqi papers were unanimous that the unjust American campaign against Iraq was based on false allegations aimed at harming Iraqi victory.

An article by AL-THAWRAH newspaper said the feverish Zionist-American campaign against Iraq does not depend on any evidence or proof but rather on statements by a handful of traitors who cut their links with the homeland, people and land.

Another article by AL-THAWRAH, mouthpiece of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party said all records of struggle in the world refer to the fight of liberation movements against Americans injustice and tyranny. The world should ask in this regard the children of Vietnam and Palestine, it pointed out.

AL-JUMHURIYAH daily of Baghdad, stressed in four articles published today that the United States over many years maintained a course of frightening and terrorizing peoples and exercising pressure on their governments.

The daily added that Washington, Tel Aviv, London and Tehran move in a blind wickedness in a dirty attempt to create confusion on the victories achieved by Iraq and to blow up peace efforts of the Iraqi-Iranian negotiations to reach a sound and comprehensive implementation of Security Council Resolution No. 598.

The daily stressed that the evil aggressive alliance had failed militarily and could not harm Iraq's integrity of land and dignity of its people.

AL-JUMHURIYAH Cited on U.S.-Israeli 'Follies'

JN1909104588 Baghdad INA in English 0925 GMT 19 Sep 88

[Text] Baghdad, Sept. 19, INA—American-Zionist circles, by unleashing their current defamatory campaign against Iraq, aimed at fabricating false legitimacy to the Zionist entity to enable it to carry out an act of some kind against some Iraqi economic enterprises, AL-JUMHURIYAH paper said.

In an editorial published here today, AL-JUMHURIYAH referred to a statement made on the 15th of this moth by the Zionist justice minister to "'AL-HAMISHAMAR" monthly periodical.

The daily stressed that American-Zionist circles assigned to the United States of America, in its capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council, the task of providing political cover to the Zionist entity's criminal intentions.

AL-JUMHURIYAH advised American-Zionist circles not to go too far in their illusions and aggressive tendencies and not to get themselves involved in any trouble for which they would be paying costly, had they dared to attack any target inside Iraq.

The paper called upon American-Zionist circles to abandon their mean, overt techniques of antagonizing Iraq and placing spikes in the wheel of its progress.

The daily stressed "Iraq holds the American-Zionist circles responsible in front of whole world for all follies committed by them in this regard."

Mubarak: Iraq Ready for Peace Negotiations

TA2209080288 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 22 Sep 88 pp 1, 14

[Report by Smadar Peri]

[Text] Egyptian President Husni Mubarak revealed this week that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn had told him he was ready to enter peace negotiations with Israel.

"There is an Arab partner to peace," President Mubarak stated in a meeting with Prof Shim'on Shamir, the new Israeli ambassador to Cairo, at the end of the ceremony, held 3 days ago, in which the latter presented his credentials.

At the end of the ceremony, in which 11 new ambassadors to Egypt presented their credentials, the ambassadors of Israel and Iraq were asked to stay at the presidential palace for a private audience with the Egyptian president.

Mubarak and Ambassador Shamir reviewed the situation in the Middle East country by country.

The Egyptian president pointed out that the moderate Arab countries, including Iraq, whose president he met with recently, are ready to open negotiations which would be conducive to peace with Israel.

While the Israeli ambassador relayed two messages to the Egyptian president—one from Prime Minister Shamir and another from Vice Prime Minister Peres (both dealing with the Palestinian issue, with Shamir's reiteration that Israel would never talk to the PLO)—Mubarak did not relay any message to Jerusalem.

[In a report by Ilan Kfir, Paris correspondent Dan Gil'adi, and Gay Bekhor on page one, Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew on 22 September reports that "Egyptian President Husni Mubarak has sent a message to Foreign Minister Peres noting that the Palestinians will soon surprise Israel with some moderate resolutions. The message was relayed on the eve of Yom Kippur by Israeli Ambassador Prof Shim'on Shamir, who had earlier conferred with the Egyptian President. According to the ambassador's report on the meeting, Mubarak did not elaborate on the nature of the Palestinian moves, but it is believed that the Egyptian president mentioned the possibility that 'Arafat would announce the establishment of a government-in-exile and the acceptance of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Mubarak added that Israel must enter a dialogue with the Palestinians to promote a political settlement in the region, and, at the same time, he stressed his country's commitment to the peace treaty with Israel. He asked Shamir to forward a request to the Israeli Government not to let marginal details harm relations between the two countries."]

In the talk at the presidential palace it was stressed that "everything" in the region is frozen until after the elections in Israel and the United States.

Shomron Discusses Preparedness, Satellite

TA2109210188 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Interview with Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Dan Shomron by Moshe Shlonsky on 20 September; place not given—videorecorded]

[Excerpt] [Shlonsky] Chief of Staff, 15 years after the Yom Kippur War and 3 days after the launching of the Israeli satellite, can we say that Israel's state of readiness is better now than it was 15 years ago?

[Shomron] I believe that it is better, but this has no connection to the new Israeli satellite. We are of course making improvements in the state of readiness, just as we are in all other fields, but the issue of a surprise, which is the central issue on Yom Kippur, has various facets. A great deal has been said about this.

I would like to clarify one aspect. When there is an over-reaction to warnings, when we do not yet know whether or not there is really going to be a war, there is a price to be paid both politically and from the aspect of military escalation.

[Shlonsky] By over-reaction do you mean for example the mobilization of the reserve forces?

[Shomron] Yes, the mobilization of the reserves or the movement of forces in the field. Besides the political aspect, it could lead to escalating repercussions. This is part of attrition—halting the training of forces for some time in order to move them to various locations. All that costs a lot of money. The levels that have to make decisions also take into account the price. It is not only a question of saying: There is an alert, either we react or we do not.

[Shlonsky] Do you view the technological satellite launched yesterday as having a military option in the future, use as a spy satellite?

[Shomron] Our satellite is a civilian one. It was manufactured by the civilian industries. We are in the first stage, a very successful stage, but still a first stage.

If we look at more experienced countries which already have satellites, they exploit them for the entire potential spectrum, civilian and also military. We will live and see if we reach this capability.

[Shlonsky] But a satellite with the capability of observing from the skies can certainly help Israel.

[Shomron] Pictures from high up can certainly help.

[Shlonsky] Recently there has been a change in the strategic situation in the Middle East. The Iran-Iraq war has ended, there are long-range missiles in Saudi Arabia, there are chemical weapons.

Do we plan to change Israel's defense concept following these changes, and again increase the defense budget? What is happening in these fields?

[Shomron] There has been a change. The change did not take place in a single day, but the process of change has begun. Its potential to threaten is not insignificant, and there are a lot of uncertainties and possibilities of changing direction.

We have considered the situation, we are constantly reconsidering the situation, and we are of course preparing ourselves for the possibilities and possible changes.

[Shlonsky] What does it mean when you say we are preparing ourselves? Does it mean, for example, that we will ask for a supplementary defense budget? Will we stop cutting the size of the Army?

[Shomron] These changes also call for resources. I do not want to talk about the budget in this interview.

[Shlonsky] Which changes? Could we have more details on the macro level?

[Shomron] Some changes are of course in intelligence, warnings, to know what is really happening. Another aspect is to prepare military answers for the various possibilities.

[Shlonsky] We are more than 9 months into the uprising and we now observe an internal dispute between the extreme Muslims and the PLO. Where does Israel stand in this dispute? Is it taking a side?

[Shomron] I would like to start with something more general. We should view this civilian uprising, which they call the intifada [uprising], with open eyes, without illusions, but also without fear.

The issue is not some temporary, local problem of a sudden demonstration cropping up. It is part of a long process which is built on real frustration existing within all levels of the population.

After 9 months, we are now reaching the stage in which the population and their leadership outside the territories are trying to reach political achievements. The more it reaches the point where they consider what direction the achievements will take, the more differences and splits spill out.

These splits have several facets. Some are within the so-called PLO. There are differences inside the organization. Some want an immediate achievement, even in return for recognition of Israel. Some remain loyal to the Palestinian Covenant and do not recognize Israel under any circumstances.

Another group, the Islamic Covenant, seeks an Islamic state very similar to Khomeyni's Iran. That is, a religious state based on Islamic laws, which of course does not make any compromises, including not with Israel.

[Shlonsky] How does Israel view this dispute, is it taking a side?

[Shomron] This conflict, as we view it, is between themselves. We are not a party to the conflict, but it shows us how problematic the situation is. Any decision the PNC might adopt would also, in my view, lead to internal wars and murders as long as the struggle centers on which political direction to take. Up to now they had a common objective—they all wanted us to leave.

[Shlonsky] Up to now the government has demanded of the IDF that it maintain relative quiet in the territories. What will happen if there is a government which tells the IDF: Return the situation to what it was before? Can you step forward and say that the IDF could return the situation to what it was 9 months ago?

[Shomron] I assume that any such instruction by the government would be in consultation with the Army. Together we will consider what the possibilities and means are.

I would now like to say that we are capable of lowering the level of violent activity against us and Israeli inhabitants, and among themselves, and we are in fact doing it. This process is not as fast as we would like.

The IDF would certainly like to change the situation immediately, but we work within the law, and to me the law is not merely a technical concept. The law is a state's normative moral code. We are operating within that framework, and we will achieve our objectives within that framework.

[Shlonsky] Do you believe that we are capable, within the law, of returning the situation to what it was before the uprising, or to reach a situation of calm we can live with?

[Shomron] We can certainly reach a situation of calm with which we can live. It is very difficult to provide exact answers because it also depends on outside decisions, and not on what is happening in the field. [passage omitted]

Firebomb Explodes Near Sharon's Home; No Damage

TA2109183588 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] In Jerusalem, a firebomb was thrown today at a Border Police patrol near the home of Minister Ari'el Sharon on Hagay Street in the Muslim quarter in the Old City.

Our correspondent Yosi Koren reports that the firebomb exploded, but there were neither casualties nor damage.

More on Unrest, Related Incidents in Territories

1 Soldier, 4 Arabs Wounded

TA2109184188 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] An IDF soldier was slightly wounded when he was hit by a stone, and three Arabs were shot during disturbances over the Yom Kippur holiday in Judaea and Samaria.

Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that a curfew was imposed today on the Balatah refugee camp near Nabulus following rioting. Two Arab inhabitants of the camp were shot and wounded by the IDF. A resident of the village of 'Abwayn in the Ramallah area was also wounded.

Yesterday, an Arab youth was wounded in the village of Artas near Bethlehem.

There were also clashes with soldiers and stone throwing in other locations in Judaea and Samaria. The curfews on Qalqilyah, the villages of 'Azzun, Dhannabah, and the Tulkarm refugee camp continue.

Arab Youth Killed, 7 Wounded

TA2109193688 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] An 18-year-old youth in the Al-Burayj refugee camp in the center of the Gaza Strip was shot dead by the IDF today. Military sources said the dead man had led the disturbances in the camp. Seven other people were wounded. There were a number of incidents of stone-throwing at IDF forces in Judaea and Samaria during Yom Kippur.

Four local inhabitants were wounded during these incidents, two from the Balatah refugee camp. A curfew was imposed on the camp. A Nabulus inhabitant was stabbed this evening. Arab sources said the man was suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities.

In the Shu'fat refugee camp a vehicle belonging to a local policeman who serves on Jerusalem's Temple Mount was set on fire last night, our police affairs correspondent Uri Kohen-Aharonov reports. He also reports that there were several cases of arson in the Judaean hills and along the coastline.

In a fire in the Modi'in area some 250 dunums of natural forest were burned. Footprints led to the nearby village, but no arrests have been reported.

Further Incidents, Casualties

TA2109214688 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] An IDF patrol killed an inhabitant of Al-Burayj in the Gaza Strip during a riot. In Khan Yunus, two inhabitants were wounded, and in the Al-Shati' refugee camp four residents were very slightly wounded.

In Dayr al-Balah inhabitants stoned a patrol and the soldiers returned fire, wounding one of the demonstrators.

Arab sources report one person wounded in Janin and one in Qalqilyah. Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that an Arab youth suffering from knife wounds was brought to a hospital in Nabulus.

Arab sources said he was suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities.

Palestinian Department Head on Joint Committee

JN2009111588 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 20 Sep 88 pp 1, 20

[By Faysal al-Shubul]

[Text] Amman—Dr Ahmad Qatanani, director of Palestinian Affairs Department in the Foreign Ministry, has asserted that the Jordanian and Palestinian sides in the Jordanian-Palestinian committee's meetings have agreed on all issues without disagreeing on any items in the agenda.

In statements to SAWT AL-SHA'B, he said that the committee discussed only the needs of the occupied territories, the financial situation of the common support fund, Arab obligations to the fund, and how to urge Arab states to fulfill their various obligations to the fund.

Answering a question on justifications for keeping the committee after Jordan's decision to disengage legal and administrative ties with the occupied West Bank, he said that the committee is a technical one formed by the 1978 Baghdad Arab summit conference to support citizens' steadfastness in the occupied Arab territories through the common support fund—financed by Arab states which support it. He also said that out of $1000 million—the sum of the Arab states' obligations to the fund at the rate of $10 million a year—the fund only received $450 million. This amount was spent by the committee through joint cooperation.

He said the committee's existence and continuity depend on the flow of Arab obligations to it, particularly from those states which have not paid their obligations for some time. Since 1986, only Saudi Arabia has fulfilled its obligations toward the fund while other countries have not. We expect other committed Arab states to fulfill their obligations to the fund. Since the formation of the committee, one-third of the money it allocated for support was in the form of agricultural, industrial, and housing loans.

Therefore, the continued functioning of the committee will guarantee the management of these loans and supervise their repayment in cooperation with specialized credit institutions. He added that the fund may receive gifts, grants, and loans. This is another reason why the committee should continue because the spending will have to be coordinated. The Jordanian and Palestinian sides do not believe there is any good reason why the committee should stop functioning. They believe that it is beneficial for it to continue. The committee proved its usefulness in supporting steadfastness in the absence of political coordination between Jordan and the PLO.

Answering another question regarding the money that was not paid by the Arab states to the fund and that totals $550 million, he said that it will remain as obligations for Arab countries which have not paid them, and that these are not debts on those countries. Therefore, we are still hopeful that these states will fulfill their obligations toward the fund. Regarding the two sides agreement on new moves in order to contact these states, he said that they agreed to continue with the previous method, whereby each of them will hold bilateral talks with Arab states when the opportunity arises.

Regarding the duties of the Palestinian Affairs Department of the Foreign Ministry, he said that these are the same as the duties that were entrusted to the Ministry of Occupied Homeland Affairs with one simple difference—it deals with citizens of the occupied West Bank as Palestinians and not Jordanians. He said the new duties came as result of the disengagement decision. The other duties concerning the movement of occupied territory citizens, the movement of their products, and the follow up of issues related to their interests will remain the same. The department receives scores of administrative issues daily and works to complete them in the shortest possible time.

The department's second function is connected to the Jordanian-Palestinian joint committee, whereby the department receives the applications and coordinates them with the committee's general secretariat.

The third function is connected to refugee affairs. The department still deals with these affairs through coordination with UNRWA and other host Arab countries. Also, the department directly allocates a certain amount ranging between 3-4 million Jordanian dinars a year to be spent on roads, electricity, and services projects in the camps.

Study Made on Linking Power Grids With Egypt

JN2009122588 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Sep 88 p 3

[Text] Amman (Petra, J.T.)—A joint Jordanian-Egyptian team has finalised a feasibility study on a project for linking the national grids of the two countries—a scheme which is expected to become operational by 1993.

An official statement issued upon the conclusion of the team's work at the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) in Amman said that the two sides are now in the course of working out a plan on the actual work of linking the grids.

The team is working closely with a French firm "Electricite de France" on the prospects of laying a submarine cable connecting Al-'Aqabah Thermal Power Station and two points in Egypt—one in the Sinai Peninsula and the other in Suez.

Once a final report on the project has been drawn up, the two countries will float tenders in 1989 and work would begin a year later, according to JEA officials. The linkage with Egypt, they said, will help the two sides deal with emergency power shortages and benefit from low-cost power produced by either side.

Official JEA statistics indicate that Jordan's overall power consumption is currently 500 megawatts but that overall production capacity, when all stations are operational, is expected to be 900 megawatts.

The officials said that the linkage of national grids was approved by the Joint Jordanian Egyptian Higher Committee in 1980 when Cairo and Amman decided to embark on measures in this connection and to upgrade their transformer and generating stations.

Jordan's grid was connected with Syria's in 1981 with a 230 kilovolt line and the two countries have since been exchanging power supplies wherever there was need for such practice.

Under the feasibility study agreement with the French firm, Jordan and Egypt left an option clause for possible Saudi Arabia's inclusion should Riyadh decide to join in.

High level contacts were held earlier between Riyadh on the one hand and Amman and Cairo on the other, to explore the prospects of Saudi Arabian inclusion in the network as a third partner, according to these officials.

In an earlier interview with the JORDAN TIMES, JEA's chief engineer Ribh al-Hamid said that the door was also open for Syria and Turkey to link their grids with the projected networks in a manner similar to a network linking European countries.

Meanwhile in Kuwait, a general conference has begun on the prospects of linking national grids of Arab countries in Asia and Africa. The three-day conference which is organised by the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) will discuss current plans for linking the Gulf Cooperation Council's states networks, those of north and South Yemen, and the Egyptian-Jordanian plan.

The fund's president, 'Abd al-Latif Al-Hamad, who opened the meetings, said that the AFESD has so far granted 12 Arab countries a total of 30 loans, totaling $55 million, to help promote their power projects.

Government Announces Exports to Iraq To Resume
JN2209065588 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 22-23 Sep 88 p 6

[By Salamah B. Ni'mat, JORDAN TIMES economics correspondent]

[Text] Amman—The government announced Wednesday that $75 million worth of Jordanian exports to Iraq, halted in April for exceeding a bilateral trade quota, will be resumed in the first half of October after an agreement was reached with the Iraqi government.

Industry and Trade Ministry Secretary-General Muhammad al-Saqqaf said that following recent negotiations here with the Iraqi side, an agreement was reached to resume exports to Iraq after defining the value of letters of credit opened against Iraq import orders. Al-Saqqaf told Petra that letters of credit opened by Jordanian exporters were extended and that some contracts were signed for the importation of Iraqi goods to cover the value of Jordanian exports now included within this year's trade exchange.

He said that the Amman Chamber of Industry and all concerned parties will be notified, by mid-October, of the procedures related to the resumption of exports and repayment arrangements. The secretary-general said that the Iraqi side informed him that instructions have already been issued to pay the value of letters of credit for goods already shipped to Baghdad after April 17, and whose value of $5 million was not paid by the Iraqi Al-Rafidayn Bank.

Al-Saqqaf said that a list of the names of Jordanian exporters and the numbers of their letters of credits and their value will reach the bank next week to be paid immediately. He called on concerned exporters to prepare all needed documents in preparation for their presentation to the Al-Rafidayn Bank for payment. The five-month crisis appeared to be nearing a settlement late last month after talks here between Jordanian official and Iraqi Foreign Trade Ministry Undersecretary Qabis Abd al-Fattah.

The Iraqi official then announced his government's approval of a Jordanian Ministry of Industry and Trade proposal to resume exports by Jordanian industries. Last month, Industry and Trade Minister Hamdi al-Tabba' told the JORDAN TIMES that the ministry had narrowed down Iraqi letters of credit for Jordanian exports to $100 million, limiting them to Jordanian-manufactured goods involving a minimum of 40 per cent of local material and value added.

The figure brought down from nearly $300 million was apparently further squeezed to $75 million acording to Al-Saqqaf's announcement Wednesday. The original figure mostly included the value of reexports of non-Jordanian goods. These orders were declared as null and void by the Central Bank of Jordan and the ministry.

The Central Bank stopped financing Jordanian exports April 16 when it noted that import orders exceeded by far the $185 million trade ceiling in the bilateral protocol. The decision shook the industrial sector and caused a decline of about 10 per cent in the share value of industrial firms at the Amman Financial Market. Iraq is Jordan's largest export market.

Al-Husayni, Al-Huss Return From Damascus

NC2209050388 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Chamber Speaker Husayn al-Husayni and Acting Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss returned at dawn today from Damascus, where they had conducted consultations with Syrian President al-Asad and Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam. The consultations revolved around the developments regarding the constitutional deadline. According to sources close to Al-Husayni and Al-Huss, a positive atmosphere prevailed when the two sides touched on the holding of the Chamber session today to elect Deputy Dahir, who was received by the Syrian president at 2030 last night.

Former President Sulayman Franjiyah and his son, Robert, also returned from Damascus today.

Maronites Denounce Statement as 'Cheap Intrigue'

NC2109111788 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1100 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] The grouping and representatives of Maronites in the North have responded to a report broadcast over a private radio in East Beirut to the effect that a statement was issued in the North assailing his beautitude the patriarch. In their response, the grouping and representatives said:

The North, through its leaders, key figures, and sects, denounces the contents of the statement, which smells of cheap intrigue, particularly at this critical stage. We highly praise Patriarch Sfayr and his unionist and patriotic stands. The statement seeks, in light of the agents' attempts, to bring pressure to bear on Patriarch Sfayr. The Patriarchate seat is above all such trivialities. This seat does not only belong to the Maronites, but to all Lebanese.

Christian Deputies May Boycott Election Session

NC2109194388 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1845 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] The Christian deputies held an expanded meeting in Bkirki tonight. On emerging from the meeting, the conferees issued the following statement:

1. The conferees supported the demand that the election session take place at Mansur Palace instead of Al-Najmah Square.

2. In the event that the session is not held, President al-Jumayyil will tomorrow announce a government which will assume power.

3. Damascus has not retreated from its declared stands as a result of today's meeting between Presidents al-Jumayyil and al-Asad.

4. The deputies will meet again at Bkirki at 0900 tomorrow to resume their consultations.

According to Deputy Rashid al-Khuri, President al-Jumayyil's visit to Damascus was not successful. Al-Khuri stressed that the Christian deputies' stand is united. He declared that they refuse to attend tomorrow's session if it is held at Al-Najmah Square, but they might attend if it takes place at Mansur Palace.

Deputy al-Khuri added that if the election is not held, a new government will be formed.

Deputy Emile Ruhan al-Saqr said it is likely that the deputies will not attend tomorrow's session. Deputy Jubran Tawq stated that the Syrians are insisting on a specific name. He noted that President al-Jumayyil told the deputies that a new government might be announced if the election is not held tomorrow.

It has been learned from the conferees' sources that three committees have been formed. The first will get in touch with President al-Jumayyil, the second will get in touch with the Army commander and key Christian figures, and the third will get in touch with Lebanese Forces Commander Dr Samir Ja'ja'. It has been reported that a committee of deputies has gone to B'abda Palace to meet with President al-Jumayyil.

President al-Jumayyil returned directly from Damascus to Bkirki aboard a helicopter. He met privately with Patriarch Sfayr for 40 minutes. He briefed the deputies meeting there on the results of his talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. President al-Jumayyil declined to make any statement, but sources of the Lebanese delegation described the situation as very delicate. It has been learned that Damascus is still insisting on its stands.

Christian Deputies Send Emissary to Damascus

NC2209072788 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0715 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Christian deputies began their crucial meeting in Bkirki 10 minutes ago. All the deputies said that there will be no parliamentary session today if the venue is not moved to Mansur Palace. The conferees have sent an emissary to the Syrian capital. Twenty-six Christian deputies are attending the meeting.

Christians Seek 'Easy' Election Participation

NC2209095288 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0920 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The Christian deputies, who met at Bkirki today, have authorized Deputy Speaker Albert Mukhaybir to discuss with Speaker Husayn al-Husayni the question of making it easy for all deputies to participate in the election.

Speaking on behalf of the conferees in Bkirki, Deputy Mukhaybir said: today's discussions were patriotic and were aimed at consolidating the foundations of the Republic, to which all Lebanese adhere. On our part, we are untiringly seeking to consolidate the Republic and unify Lebanon.

Mukhaybir added: The conferees authorized me to discuss with Speaker al-Husayni the question of making it easy for all deputies to participate in the election and to inform him about the conferees' decision that we and our colleagues in West Beirut are a cohesive and patriotic mass which nothing can divide.

'Awn Addresses Officers on Rejection of Dahir

NC2109151788 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] In the context of his regular meetings with them, Army Commander General Michel 'Awn has explained the current delicate situation to officers of the rank of major and above from various brigades, areas, schools, and institutes. He also explained the Army's stand on recent developments, particularly those connected with the constitutional deadline, and the background to the Army's rejection of a sole candidate. The proposal that there should be a sole candidate obstructs the parliamentary process and the democratic rules on which the Lebanese system is based, he said.

The commander stated: There are suffocating [khaniqah] traditions which we have been following in conventional political conduct. Their violation is considered tantamount to mutiny or revolution. It is on this basis that some have considered the army's rejection of the imposition, by means of an external initiative, of one candidate for the Lebanese presidency as an incorrect and serious matter. Those who reached agreement within the framework of the U.S.-Syrian initiative have officially informed us that they have agreed on one candidate for the presidency of our republic.

They say that we only have to ensure his election and agree that the choice they have made on our behalf is a legitimate one, without consultation with or participation by any element in the Lebanese administration. Therefore it was natural that my answer to them should be that there is no reason for a formal election now that the appointment has been made.

The Army commander added: I explained to them that we are proud that countries like the United States and Syria should support our president because this external support helps us to solve our problem. However, this president should be chosen by the will of the Lebanese—all the Lebanese. If a president is appointed by outsiders, demanding internal support for him, where is his strength and where is his credibility?

This explains why we rejected this appointment as a matter of principle. It is not a question of the individual concerned, regardless of who he may be or what his qualifications are. Therefore I consider this rejection as a revolution against the codeword which has often come from abroad and become a rule for submission, even a custom which no one is permitted to ignore.

The Army commander went on to say: I told them very clearly that the codeword has failed for good this time. It will not be accepted any more as long as we adhere to our position that no party can impose any decisions on the Lebanese which do not stem from their free will or conclude deals at their expense and behind their backs.

'Awn continued: We explained to everyone that we support free elections and freedom of nomination because they are part of Lebanese sanctities and values. As a result, heaven and earth were moved. Some supported us and others waited. Some called for meetings and others kept silent, but all were amazed because the Army commander spoke out. I spoke out because silence at this time would have amounted to crime and treason, particularly since some Lebanese cannot speak out for various reasons.

I leave it to those who are in positions of power and responsibility to say whether they can speak freely or not. What we say in this national affair is very clear. Anyone who wants to become president of our republic has to understand the following two points in order to reach B'abda Palace: There will be no military battle and there will be no foreign capitals. There are also the following two conditions: the liberation of Lebanon from the occupation, and the restoration of sovereignty. We reject all types of pressure on any Lebanese faction or any part of our land, because this is considered tantamount to the declaration of war against us.

The Army commander has also rejected any partitionist political measure, saying: We will fight such measures the same way we fight everything which undermines the unity of Lebanon. He added: Our stand on this can be summed up by the saying of Imam 'Ali, may God be pleased with him: "You can work from your heart to your sword. Anyone who can brandish his sword, let him do so." However, no unpatriotic goals will be tolerated. Above all, no coercion will be tolerated. Those who are stronger than us can crush us, but they cannot wrest a signature from us to a deed reducing our right and dignity.

'No Military Flareup' Expected

NC2109151888 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1415 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Excerpts] Army Commander Michel 'Awn arrived at Bkirki at 1630 today and made a statement saying that no military flareup is expected. He added that he does

not pin great hopes on today's visit by President Amin al-Jumayyil to Damascus, mentioning that he had prior knowledge of Al-Jumayyil's plans to visit Damascus today. [passage omitted]

Earlier today, 'Awn met at [the Defense Ministry in] Al-Yarzah with the Lebanese Forces commander. During the 1-hour meeting, the general conditions in the country and Al-Jumayyil's visit to Syria were discussed.

Following the meeting in Al-Yarzah, a delegation composed of Dany Sham'un, George 'Adwan, and Jubran al-Tuwayni went to Bkirki to brief Patriarch Sfayr on the meeting.

Dany Sham'un said afterwards that they had briefed the patriarch on the discussions which took place in Al-Yarzah. He stated that concerted efforts by all forces are needed to ensure that the elections will take place in an atmosphere of freedom and independence and that the elected president will genuinely represent the entire country. Sham'un said: We assure everyone that the current efforts will lead to the president being elected in freedom and independence. When asked what will happen if the current efforts fail, he replied: We will exert more efforts until a president is elected who represents the Lebanese will.

Concerning Al-Jumayyil's visit to Damascus, Sham'un expressed hope that his efforts will bear fruit. He added that he supports Al-Jumayyil's efforts.

Views Army Role, Presidency

JN2109165088 Kuwait AL-ANBA' in Arabic
20 Sep 88 p 28, 29

[Interview with Army Commander General Michel 'Awn by 'Umar Sabahi in Beirut; date not given]

[Text] [Sabahi] You have said that the Army will not let the country reach a constitutional vacuum and will shoulder responsibility after 23 September. Does General 'Awn still adhere to this trend, and how does he view the coming stage?

['Awn] This was said to the military, and the Lebanese heard this through the military when the people were afraid that 23 September will come without the presidential elections. The people thought if this happens it will be our end. The people were frightened because of the break in the official and political institutions and because nobody will assume responsibility after 23 September. The president's mandate will expire, and the Chamber of Deputies will enter a stalemate because it has become an election body only and has no right to carry out any other task.

The Council of Ministers resigned legally and constitutionally and another council might be formed after this date. There is a possibility that half a government will be formed. This is in addition to other serious matters. In light of this, I devised a trend for the military and frightened citizens. Constitutions do not make people and republics, but the people make the constitutions, homelands, and republics.

If all this happens, we, as a people, will not disappear from history or geography. We will continue to exist as a strong people. We can make constitutions, republics, and laws. We are not drawn on a blackboard with white chalk so that anybody can erase us.

We gave a signal to countries dealing with our crisis—if these countries do not stand up, this does not mean that we will vanish, but we will continue to exist even if they do not stand up. We strongly exist through our presence and future aspirations.

Therefore, 23 September is not the end of history or geography. This date is not our beginning nor our end. There is no doubt that it will be a difficult stage in the life of Lebanon, but we will continue the march. And the people are the ones who make governments and presidents, not the opposite.

[Sabahi] Does this trend still exist despite the U.S.-Syrian negotiations and their results?

['Awn] I hope that a final agreement will be reached to end the ongoing developments in the homeland. But as a responsible man, I must shoulder my responsibility and be present and ready to face any serious situation. We welcome the positive eventualities, but our responsibilities start with the negative eventualities. Hence we talk about the crises to reassure the citizens and remind them that we are their strength and express their will; we are ready to defend them, their property, and their identity; and we are present for this purpose.

[Sabahi] From what you have just said, do we understand that there is a certain plan by the military leadership to move when a constitutional vacuum is created or about to happen?

['Awn] I cannot say whether there is a plan or not, but there are dire needs that have to be provided. We have to take all the initiatives for those. These needs are expressed politically, economically, and through the security situation. We are ready to provide and express these needs. Everyone should set their minds at ease because they have become very frightened of the end and annihilation. They should rest assured that we are still in our place, our past, present, and future and no one can put an end to us.

We are not dreaming of our presence. We are the presence and the identity. This is not an issue under discussion or an issue to be afraid of. There is, however, a type of psychological war against the Lebanese people which is trying to get them to give in to certain solutions, capitulate, and despair.

[Sabahi] Some interpret the situation to be that the Army will not be able to move after 23 September outside the sphere of Army presence in the eastern sector. Thus, will its role be limited in the absence of agreement with the forces in the other sectors?

['Awn] I am talking about an initiative and not agreement with anyone. Let the whole world inside and outside understand that we are present as a force. We will not express this presence through force because our force is to defend the citizen, the territory, and Lebanese property. If this, however, should conflict with our presence and we stand face to face with an existence crisis, then there is no side with which we will not fight; in fact we will fight with all regardless of the results because as I said earlier and I repeat now, we are not up for annihilation. We are not writing on a blackboard with white chalk and nobody can afford the price of triumphing over us.

[Sabahi] The years of the war have led to division within the Army at some stages. Will unifying the Army be a starting point to reunifying the country?

['Awn] This question gives me the urge to discuss a basic and essential subject. Everyone is now talking about unifying the Army, dividing it, and sectarianizing it. This has become repetitive talk to me because dividing the Army came as a result of classifying the Lebanese people. With this classification, the land and crossings were classified, and the Army became the captive of an imposed geographic reality. The Army, now, has to cross many forces and barriers before it reaches military unity. This is why the elements of the Army have had to join the centers and barracks which are near.

We, the Army leadership, have facilitated things for some of these elements, because in some cases, it became impossible for these elements to pay the transportation fares due to the collapsing financial situation. However, the Lebanese Army is not divided as some people think or believe. Twenty-five percent of the Army is Muslim and 75 percent is Christian in some areas, and vice versa in other areas. This is in accordance with the existing reality which controls Army discipline.

There is another expression of unity among the personnel of this Army. This unity is not necessarily an expression of a mixture of Muslims and Christians, but that the Lebanese Army shares common concepts, aspirations, wills, and convictions.

The orientation now is that the Army imposes unbiased security, which is the right of every citizen regardless of his sect or religion. The soldier who carries out his task in any Lebanese area aims to give security for everyone—for passersby, residents, and others. The Army shares the same principles and views of sovereignty. Every soldier in the Army anywhere in Lebanon had the same experience with the militias and shares the same concept of independence.

So can this Army be termed dismembered? However, if the Army carries out a sectarian task that is in the interests of a certain party, it abolishes its unionist charcater and becomes an army for a regime or a party. However, we are not so. Our mission must be in the interests of everyone. At the same time, the Lebanese Army will not allow any group or minority to change or entrench a system by force. We support democracy, which is translated through our entrenched political traditions and people's consensus on the civilized system, not the backward one based on force. It is regrettable that deficiency affected the military institution, like most institutions. However, the military establishment has remained the most unified one. The deficiency that affected it is normal to armies experiencing a state of war.

[Sabahi] Supposing that the Army becomes the only force capable of saving the country from a vacuum after 23 September. Will its role be purely security, or will it control the fate of the country and exercise political authority within a dictatorial framework?

['Awn] This is one of the rumors heard in Lebanese politics and from those having small disputes. The Army does not think of getting involved in power struggles with anybody. In a case of a vacuum, we will seek to fill it to guarantee the continuation and needs of this people until they manage to overcome the crisis. The issue is not that of assuming power, which is a different matter. On the contrary, there are de facto forces controlling matters. They assumed security and political roles and created and entrenched a shaky security situation in Lebanon.

We will work to correct things. We will give everyone his appropriate role. We will restore policy to the politicians and military affairs to the military. All that the security forces—Army, internal security forces, and official security forces— will do will constitute a sound basis for this state. No state can exist without security. However, we cannot do without the roles of specialists in economics, diplomacy, and foreign affairs, nor without doctors and engineers. This is impossible. We cannot even do without politicians. Every one of us has something to do. We must represent the people.

I am not thinking of a political role but a salvation task that will restore to each his role. I am thinking of restoring security. Then each will have his normal role. The official departments will return to state authority, and the party organizations to the political parties.

As a first stage, it will be all right if the Army remains as it is now. Then it will have a normal unification process. This is not an urgent issue now because the Army is now capable of assuming any task and without any trouble. The Army in its present position appears more committed. The Army is ready under all circumstances, not in the usual terms of readiness but because the domineering issue now is the balance of power in the various areas. Of course, the Army will move on the basis of its available resources.

[Sabahi] What is your response to the political campaigns against the Army and against you personally?

['Awn] There is no need to respond to these campaigns because we will need many media channels. The people and citizens are aware of facts, of course. They are the first and last judges.

These accusations are not verified because the Army represents the real Lebanon on all Lebanese territory. It represents sovereignty and independence. However, there is no denying that there are many involved persons who cannot extricate themselves from this involvement. They attack the Army. We can say that because of the above, they try to attack us. Imagine that certain sectarian groups describe the Army as sectarian.

In fact we are a mixed army, composed of all sects and religions. We are spread all over Lebanese territory. We have never attacked the Lebanese people. But they killed the Lebanese people, displaced them, burned their homes and places of worship, and committed all sorts of crimes. They have nothing against us. None of our officers or soldiers begged any foreign capital for support to trade in politics. Indeed, each officer and soldier is defending Lebanon with his blood. Politically and morally, their pay is not affected.

We represent true politics and independence. We know where our adversaries obtain their money, weapons, and ammunition. In any case, we do not want to respond to their criticism. If we respond, we will be giving them more importance than they deserve.

[Sabahi] Much has been said of a possible military action by you described as Communique No 1. What is the truth?

['Awn] Some people are so enthusiastic about the role of the Army that they create such atmosphere. Some of those who oppose the Army are happy about such rumors to have a justification for certain actions. Both sides are wrong in any case. There is no Communique No 1. It is nonexistent, out of the question.

Yesterday, a certain military development took place and we moved. Everybody believed that what happened was the beginning of Communique No. 1. All that happened was that the defense minister was kidnapped. This required a military security action to know the whereabouts of the minister and to free him from the kidnappers. This is a shameful act, and we should move to confront it.

Hence, people live in an abnormal atmosphere. Despite the size of any move, there will be no Communique No 1. We will not steal power but defend it. We will defend the Chamber of Deputies until it elects a president; defend the president until the last moment of his mandate; defend the government until it meets; and defend the society that we want to become united again.

We are not the party that is eager to exercise power, which is already in our hands and we are in its center. The issue of the Army is different from other issues. Our work is for salvation because the gaps have become numerous and will increase if things remain as they are. These gaps can be filled in different and incorrect ways.

Hence, we must be ready because we are the most responsible establishment sworn to safeguard the homeland.

[Sabihi] If we reach a vacuum, which we all as well as you are afraid of, and the de facto forces immediately place their hands on the areas in which they are present, what will be the Army's stand then?

['Awn] The de facto forces, about which we did not speak, are not imported from outside. They represent a certain social situation and the outcome of a reaction and a reflection of a certain geopolitical reality. When they see that the Army is a factor of tranquillity, they will play down their role. We should not look at these forces as elements of fear and terrorism. The society in which these forces exist leans toward official and legitimate institutions more than toward them because it wants to guarantee its future and security. The de facto forces will follow the establishment that can protect them. I do not expect any oppostion to the Army.

There is fear now. When the de facto forces see that the matter is serious and that the Army has sufficient capability to defend and organize the country, their stands will be different. The individuals who form these forces are basically part of the homeland and people. We should not look at these forces with hostility. They are part of the people. The individuals joined these forces because of events. This is a natural outcome of the war. They joined these forces to fulfill certain social needs. When the official institutions return to their work, these phenomena will disappear automatically.

[Sabahi] There is talk of a disagreement between you and President Shaykh Amin al-Jumayyil. Some are talking of a certain attempt on his part against your personal base and the possibility of renewing this attempt to stop you from getting to the presidency?

['Awn] This is also part of the media chatter. Bad estimations of the situation sometimes take a provocative and antagonistic nature among responsible officials.

Before I mention anything else, I did not nominate myself for the presidency. I may have been nominated by the media, or some personalities, or even by virtue of my position and military experience. But there is no personal nomination from me. I also did not ask anyone to nominate me. There might be a number of supporters or friends or maybe just people talking about that, which is natural. This, however, should not be an issue of dispute. If the president is in agreement with my nomination, then he will support it. If not, then he can be opposed to it. It should not be an issue of dispute, and the president has total freedom to think what he wants.

As for the point that he might have arranged something to ruin me with the aim of removing me or not, this is a different issue. What happened would then be normal. If there are any reasons for him to remove me, then he is after all the elected authority and I am an appointed authority. There are codes of behavior one could resort to. One of these codes of behavior is to appoint a new Army commander. However, the existing rumors on this subject do not go beyond this framework, the framework of rumors that is, and they go back to acts of political concern and blackmail, which Lebanese society is suffering from.

[Sabahi] Are you experiencing any of this atmosphere?

['Awn] Every person can expect to live this way. However, personally I do not believe that this issue is proposed in an honest way.

[Sabahi] Is the Army presently clashing with the militias or not?

['Awn] Hitting the militias is not the aim or goal of the Army. These militias were born under certain circumstances during the war. When the solutions are provided, they will disappear, not by fighting them, but by absorption. Hitting these militias means hitting a basic and existing reality, from which all those who joined the ranks of the militias are benefitting. They have become their livelihood, future, continuation, and the survival of their families. It is not a purely security issue or a criminal issue to handle it by force. It is a social issue.

Therefore, we have to absorb the elements of the militias and find reasonable social situations for them in the way of work and social security. Then, we can incorporate them into the military institutions if they wish, after training and rehabilitating them, which is what I call "nationalizing" them, after the word "nation" which means elevating them to the level of one nation.

[Sabahi] Could we think in terms of the saying "let bygones be bygones"?

['Awn] No, because this means taking liberties with the rights of others. There are limited cases resulting from certain circumstances. But there are also normal crimes, which cannot be handled from the point of view of letting bygones by bygones. The citizen who killed his neighbor due to a personal quarrel or perhaps to steal something cannot be judged according to this saying. As for the quarrels and incidents resulting from the situation, they need a special legal and legitimate settlement, which could be issued by parliament.

[Sabahi] Some people fear military rule, considering it the beginning of dictatorship. What is your opinion?

['Awn] There is a difference between an army takeover and rule by the military. There are many experiments in the world that have proved that rule by the military is successful. In the United States, many military commanders ruled, the last of whom was Eisenhower and before him Roosevelt and Washington. In France, Napoleon saved France from the massacres and enacted administrative laws and rules that are still followed there. Charles de Gaulle represents the modern experiment that we are still living. However, these examples of the ancient democaracies are different from Third World democracies, where there is no political structure through which democracy can be practiced. Therefore the help of the military estabishment is sought with the aim of establishing law and order on a firm basis.

From this basis, political freedom can be derived because before law and order is realized, no system can be considered in any state. We in Lebanon are living under a nondemocratic system, a system of killing at will. This is what I told the soldiers. We support responsible freedom and not the freedom of vituperation, stealing, and killing. The Lebanese people are characterized by their love for freedom. They might quarrel over anything except freedom. We do not want undisciplined democracy, the democracy of killing at will. We in Lebanon kill each other at will. We steal the property of others at will. We should first establish a system and apply democractic principles to this system. We must restore law and order first and then restore freedom and correct, sound practices.

[Sabahi] Have you made any contacts at home or abroad for assuming the powers and responsibilities of the presidency?

['Awn] First of all, I do not have to seek responsibilities because I have shouldered responsibilities for years in the military service, and the area of my responsibilities has expanded gradually. I am the Army commander, and I have my responsibilities beginning with protecting the widow and the child who does not find his milk and ending with military issues, defense requirements, and major political issues connected with the general conditions of the country. I am aware of the needs of each village and town, and I know the problems they face because my soldiers are present there and in all areas.

And because of these responsibilities, many politicians and diplomats visit me and our talks in general deal with these needs and various questions. There is no definite aim for these talks, which are held in a frank atmosphere.

[Sabahi] The Lebanese Forces used the veto against you to prevent you reaching the presidency. Then they withdrew this veto. What is the reason?

['Awn] I have not been nominated and I was not classified. Therefore, I do not know why they nominated me and classified me or why they vetoed me and why they withrew this veto. I cannot understand this matter, so I sometimes resort to analyzing it. I cannot give you a satisfactory answer, but I think that they believe there are contradictions between me and them. Sometimes they see these contradictions disappear, so they withdraw their veto.

[Sabahi] Many people consider Gen 'Awn a potential presidential candidate. What does the general himself say?

['Awn] I am very much influenced by my profession, and I think that a soldier should not seek any task outside his military duties.

If I am invited to assume this task, I will do so with honor. If I am not invited, my lot and choice is known—namely, military life. I think I have reached the top in this military life.

[Sabahi] Do you expect this invitation to come through military action for salvation or through constitutional methods?

['Awn] So far there are legitimate institutions still working. The invitation could come through the Chamber of Deputies. However, if a president is not elected, the oath has to be honored. I have no desire or lust for power. I do not intend to take over power haphazardly. We have power. [sentence as published]

[Sabahi] What are your views on settling the situation in the south?

['Awn] The problem of the south is a basic one and there are international resolutions in this regard. The Lebanese authorities should be strong enough to restore their credibility before the international powers concerned with implementing Resolution No. 425. Here we might face one of two situations: Either there will be submission and acceptance of the resolution, or we face a situation of confrontation. Everybody will then be ready for confrontation because when the Lebanese central government presents an internationally acceptable solution and this solution is rejected, then the Army and all the people will be ready for a showdown.

However, so far we have not been able to find a solution for many reasons. The Army will guarantee the implementation of international resolutions. The moment we present an acceptable guarantee, and when we have the needed credibility, and when we become a source of strength, resolutions will be implemented and then there will be no choice left for us or for the world other than accepting the military challenge.

[Sabahi] How do you view relations with Syria?

['Awn] There are certain basic principles. Neighboring states should live in accordance with unchanging security considerations because it is impossible to have two sisterly states with diverse security requirements. Therefore, Lebanon is committed to safeguarding the security of Syria's underbelly, and Syria is committed to safeguarding Lebanon's security. This a constant factor in relations between the two countries. There are also common interests that should be discussed and safeguarded. States that are hundreds of kilometers apart have treaties between them. Does not this apply to two neighboring states?

Why should not there be a treaty between us and Syria within the framework of absolute sovereignty and complete independence, especially since Syria has had a military presence in Lebanon for 16 years. This presence was imposed by developments. To remove this presence, we should deal with the circumstances that brought it about. Most of these circumstances are due to internal issues such as the South. We are prepared to assume responsibility for this issue and solve it. We will then spare sisterly Syria the effort and cancel the power of attorney that we gave to Syria at that time to deal with the problem in the south.

[Sabahi] What are the possibilities of cooperation between the Lebanese and Syrian Armies in places where the Syrian forces exist?

['Awn] Of course, there should be a form of rationalism and objectivity in dealing with this issue to transform the abnormal situation into a normal one.

Al-Jumayyil To Form 24-Member Cabinet Under Hilu

NC2209124588 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in English 1220 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The president of the Republic, Shaykh Amin al-Jumayyil, today continued his contacts and consultations which practically did not stop all night and received in succession [former] President Charle Hilu; Army Commander General Michel 'Awn; the commander of the Gendarmerie Antoine Nasr; the chief of the Lebanese Army Intelligence Colonel Simon Qassis, and the chief of the National Liberal Party Dany Sham'un. Then President al-Jumayyil evaluated the results of his contacts with Minister Joseph al-Hashim and then received Etienne Saqr [leader of the Guardians of the Cedar Party]. He later received Minister Victor Qasir and the Director General of Public Security Jamil Ni'mah.

The president of the Republic meanwhile had summoned Member of Parliament and Deputy of Alayh Pierre Hilu, who was asked whether he was ready to head a new government and declared that he was ready to shoulder his responsibilities to the full if he was offered to chair a new cabinet. He said that the president will announce the cabinet later today.

The Voice of Lebanon has learned that the new cabinet will be chaired by the Deputy Pierre Hilu and will include 24 ministers including the ministers of the current cabinet and new ones. At 1330 President Shaykh Amin al-Jumayyil chaired a meeting which included Minister Joseph al-Hashim, member of parliament Pierre Hilu, Mr Elie Salim, and Mr Ghassan al-Tuwayni. Minister Joseph al-Hashim declared upon leaving the Presidential Palace that the president of the Republic will announce the creation of an enlarged cabinet later this afternoon and that he will be carrying out contacts.

Hilu Possible 'Transitional' Prime Minister

NC2209092188 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0845 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] President Shaykh Amin al-Jumayyil has contacted Bkirki during the meeting there of Christian deputies and spoken to Deputy Pierre Hilu. Our correspondent noted that Deputy Pierre Hilu will possibly leave Bkirki following this contact, adding that his automobile is ready to take him.

Meanwhile, former president Charles Hilu met with President al-Jumayyil this morning. After the meeting Hilu disclosed that the president will take constitutional measures to ensure the continuation of authority if a new president is not elected. Hilu noted that President al-Jumayyil might form a transitional government under a member of the Hilu family. Asked if this person is Deputy Pierre Hilu, former President Charles Hilu said: Possibly.

Composition of Transitional Government Reported

JN2209102588 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1004 GMT 22 Sep 88

[George Bashir dispatch from Beirut]

[Text] President Amin al-Jumayyil has been meeting for about an hour with the deputy for 'Alayh and former minister Pierre Hilu to form the transitional government that will assume constitutional authority if the Chamber of Deputies fails to elect a new president to succeed President Al-Jumayyil whose term of office expires at midnight on 23 September.

According to my information the new government will include Salim al-Huss, 'Umar Karami, deputy 'Abduh 'Ubaydat, 'Uthman al-Dana, 'Adil 'Usayran, Nabih Birri, Walid Junblatt, Army commander General Michel 'Awn, Lebanese Forces commander Samir Ja'ja', Liberal Party leader Danny Sham'un, Joseph al-Hashim, former foreign minister Elie Salim, former foreign minister Khalil Abu Hamad, Ghassan Tuwayni, 'Abdallah al-Rasi, and former minister Michel al-Murr.

Al-As'ad 'Prevented' From Returning to E. Beirut

NC2209102988 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] According to security sources, former Speaker Kamil al-As'ad was prevented from returning to East Beirut at midday today. He was stopped by Amal gunmen who were manning a checkpoint in the Al-Barbir area as he was returning from Al-Najmah Square. Al-As'ad had been the only deputy to cross to West Beirut from East Beirut today to attend the parliamentary session in Al-Najmah Square.

Speaker 'Believed' Kidnapped

NC2209103088 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1022 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] While former Chamber of Deputies Speaker Kamil al-As'ad was returning to the eastern area from Al-Najmah Square, he disappeared in West Beirut. He is believed to have been kidnapped.

Found 'in Good Condition'

NC2209110788 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] A short while ago, Acting Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss had a telephone conversation with former Chamber Speaker Kamil al-As'ad, who is now at the residence of Deputy Anwar al-Sabbah. They discussed the latest developments. Al-Huss also assured himself that Al-As'ad is in good condition.

It should be recalled that Al-Huss also contacted Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an, chief of the Syrian Forces' intelligence in Lebanon, during which he asked him to ensure an escort for Al-As'ad so that he can leave for any destination he desires. According to official information, gunmen riding in a Fiat pursued the motorcade of Kamil al-As'ad as he was moving from Est Beirut to West Beirut and as far as the military tribunal. On his way back [to East Beirut], Al-As'ad was intercepted by gunmen in Al-Najmah Square, but Al-As'ad managed to move to the residence of Al-Sabbah.

Meanwhile, Brig Gen Kan'an fully responded to Al-Huss' request and expressed readiness to ensure the necessary escort.

Intercepted on Birri's Order

NC2209111588 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1103 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] According to information we received from security sources a short time ago, a roadblock manned by Amal gunmen in the Al-'Ijjah area intercepted former Chamber of Deputies Speaker Kamil al-As'ad as he was returning to the eastern area and prevented him from crossing in the direction of Mansur Palace.

The information indicates that Speaker al-As'ad went to the house of Deputy Anwar al-Sabbah in the western area and that he is there now. According to the information, the house is surrounded by Amal gunmen. It has been learned that the interception operation was carried out on the personal orders of Minister Nabih Birri, who informed Damascus about this matter.

Meets With Kan'an

NC2209120988 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1202 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Excerpt] The Voice of Lebanon has learned that former Chamber of Deputies Speaker Kamil al-As'ad, who had earlier been prevented from returning to the eastern area after going to Al-Najmah Square, has met with Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an [chief of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon]. It also has been learned that former

Speaker al-As'ad has been asked to attend an expanded Islamic meeting and to sign the resolutions which this meeting will issue. According to reports, the resolutions will be inflammatory. [passage omitted]

PSP Insists on Convening in Al-Najmah Square

NC2209092888 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 0900 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] A responsible source in the PSP has made the following statement: In view of the insistence of the trio—the regime, Lebanese Forces, Army—and Patriarch Sfayr on obstructing the election session under the pretext that there will be no security at the session because it will be held in Al-Najmah Square and, therefore, the East Beirut deputies cannot reach it, we would like to emphasize our adherence to the plan to hold the session in Al-Najmah Square, the main headquarters of the Chamber of Deputies. The PSP source added: We also reiterate our rejection of the call to hold the session in Mansur Palace, as this does not provide security for the deputies.

Postponement of Session to 23 Sep Announced

NC2209080888 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0740 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Statement issued by the Office of the Speaker of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies and read by Chamber Secretary General Ihsan Abu Khalil in Beirut—live]

[Text] To pave the way for all efforts and good offices which aim to meet the constitutional deadline with regard to the election of a new president of the Republic on the basis of the principal objective—namely the salvation of Lebanon from the ordeal that has been afflicting it over the past 14 years; and to enable all fellow deputies to achieve national reconciliation with a qualitative step that would enable everyone to rise to the suitable standard, particularly those who deserve the homeland and who would relinquish their private interests for the sake of the homeland's supreme interest at its most extremely difficult stage, we announce the postponement of today's scheduled session until 1100 tomorrow, Friday. The session will be held at the Chamber's main headquarters in Al-Najmah Square.

Parliament Session, Bkirki Meeting Detailed

JN2209084088 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0808 GMT 22 Sep 88

[George Bashir dispatch from Beirut]

[Text] At 1045 Beirut time today Husayn al-Husayni, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, adjourned the session to elect a new president until tomorrow morning and announced the session will be held in [the parliament building in] Al-Najmah Square.

Only a small number of deputies came to the parliament building in the Al-Najmah Square today, none of whom lives in East Beirut.

The speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, accompanied by the acting prime minister, returned to Beirut at dawn today. A parliamentary official said the session was adjourned to allow further consultations and to seek to achieve a parliamentary and national concensus that enables all Lebanese deputies to carry out their national duty so as to overcome the ordeal.

Christian deputies met in Bkirki under Patriarch Sufayr. They unanimously agreed on the need to move the venue of the parliamentary meeting to the place customarily agreed upon in the past by all the sides, namely at the Al-Mansur Palace in the museum area. They emphasized their collective desire to carry out their constitutional duty and elect a president, on condition that the freedom of election and a safe place for holding the elections are guaranteed. The conferees in Bkirki also decided to hold contacts with Damascus to keep open the door of consultations with the Syrian capital.

President Amin al-Jumayyil, today and tomorrow being the last days of his presidential term, today received former president Charles Hilu. They consulted over developments in the situation. Informed sources said he will today address a message to the Lebanese and will carry out his constitutional duty and form a government that assumes office as of tomorrow and until the Chamber of Deputies elects a new president.

'Responsible Source' Denies Envoy Sent to Syria

JN2209103088 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0945 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Beirut, 22 Sep (INA)—An INA correspondent has learned that [Lebanese] President Amin al-Jumayyil will entrust deputy Pierre Hilu with heading an interim government this afternoon. Deputy Hilu is close to President Al-Jumayyil, the Lebanese Forces, and the army command.

In a statement to INA, a responsible source has denied that the Lebanese deputies in eastern Beirut dispatched any envoy to Damascus. The source said what happened was that these deputies entrusted Dr Albert Mukhaybar, deputy speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, with holding contacts with the speaker to inform the Syrian regime of the need to transfer the session to the Mansur Palace as a basic condition to attend tomorrow's session.

Sham'un Terms Al-Husayni's Step 'Illegal'

NC2209103888 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Dany Sham'un, leader of the National Liberal Party, who visited the Presidential Palace in B'abda, stressed that the Chamber session was postponed at the request of Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an [chief of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon].

Sham'un stated that Speaker al-Husayni's step was illegal and took place under the pressure of [Syrian] military occupation of West Beirut.

He said: We did not expect the Syrian state to take such a step against the Lebanese people.

Iddih 'Doubts' Election of New President 22 Sep

NC2209065588 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0515 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] In an interview with REUTER, Raymond Iddih has expressed doubts that a new president will be elected today. He said that Chamber of Deputies Speaker Husayn al-Husayni has decided to hold the election session at the Chamber's old building, which is located in an area under the control of the Syrian forces. He noted that the Christian deputies will meet in Bkirki this morning to decide whether or not to participate in the elections session if Speaker al-Husayni continues to insist on holding it in Al-Najmah Square.

Raymond Iddih attacked the U.S. Government, accusing it of interfering in Lebanese affairs in an unprecedented manner. He said that Washington, in agreement with Syria, is trying to compel the Lebanese to accept the nomination of Deputy Mikha'il Dahir.

Raymond Iddih voiced his expectation that President al-Jumayyil has agreed with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to appoint Deputy Dahir as prime minister. He accused a U.S. diplomat in Beirut of trying to convince the Muslim deputies that a revolution would break out if they did not approve of the election of Deputy Dahir.

Raymond Iddih reiterated that he has little chance of being elected if the elections are held today. However, he said, if he were elected, he would not return to Lebanon immediately but would visit the five states that are permanent members of the UN Security Council to call on them to bring about an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. If they do not do so, Iddih added, he would reject the presidency.

However, should he obtain promises that international pressure would be brought to bear on Israel to compel it to withdraw, he would return to Lebanon and ask Syria to withdraw from Lebanese territory. Iddih said he would then dissolve the militia groups and reorganizes the Army.

Amal Foils Israeli Advance Attempt

NC2209051888 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] In the resisting South, resistance men yesterday carried out an operation against Israeli troops and agent Antoine Lahd's militia near Qa'lat al-Shaqif and Jabal Safi. Three members of the faithful resistance were martyred during the operation. Enemy artillery pounded villages in Iqlim al-Tuffah and the outskirts of Zawtar, south of Al-Nabatiyah.

In a similar development, fighting broke out between the Amal Movement's regular forces and Israeli gunboats, which chased Palestinian rubber boats along the Tyre-al-Qasimiyah coast last night.

Meanwhile, Amal Movement sources said that while an enemy force tried to advance from Qal'at al-Shaqif toward Al-Hamra' farm at 1900 yesterday, Tuesday [as heard], the force was intercepted by an Amal force, which ambushed it. Clashes involving the use of light- and medium-caliber machineguns and rockets broke out for 30 minutes, at the end of which the enemy force was compelled to withdraw to its position.

Reportage on Clashes, Shelling in Beirut Areas

Rocket Defused

NC2209061188 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0515 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Two shells fell on the B'abda area at 0400 today. A flare fired on the Suq al-Gharb area last night caused fire in a forest on the contact lines, which triggered landmines.

A security source has told the Voice of Lebanon that, at 0100 today, a military expert defused a rocket that was aimed at Bristol Hotel [in West Beirut]. The source added that the 110-mm rocket was mounted on a fixed base at the corner of the street separating the Triumph and Bristol Hotels.

Another 110-mm rocket exploded near the Bayrut Hospital on the corniche of the Sports City at 2300 last night. The target of the rocket was not known.

Three Amal Officials Killed

NC2209122688 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1212 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] According to a security report a short while ago, unidentified gunmen assassinated three Amal Political Bureau members at 1400 this afternoon near [words indistinct] in the Al-Awza'i area. They are Amal Organizational official Dawud Dawud; Mahmud Faqih, chairman of the Executive Committee; and Al-Hajj Hasan Sbaytah, who were riding in a white Mercedes car. Amal sources confirmed this report, but no official statement has yet been issued.

Tanks 'Roaming' Streets

NC2109193688 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1900 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] In a bid to obstruct the solutions which are being forwarded to save the country and coinciding with the state of military alert in East Beirut, the Al-Yarzah Army has escalated the situation on the mountain combat lines by firing heavy machinegun rounds at the patriotic areas in Ra's al-Jabal. Since 2115, the Army began firing illumination rounds over Ra's al-Jabal, Dahr al-Wahsh, and Hill 888. Army vehicles were seen assembling in 'Arayya and Bdadun, which confirms the ill intentions the plotters are harboring toward the nation and the homeland.

Reports from East Beirut indicate that the Lebanese Forces deployed their militiamen in areas close to the military council and in Al-Ashrafiyah today. Tanks and personnel carriers were seen roaming East Beirut's streets, while gunmen were also deployed in Antilyas and Al-Barbarah.

Shelling Intensifies

NC2209093088 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0924 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The shelling of the residential areas close to the contact lines in Beirut intensified a short time ago, especially in the areas of Primo, Sodeco, Al-Nasirah, and Al-Mudawwar.

'Violent Explosions' Heard

NC2209093588 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0933 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] We have just received the following: Clashes involving the use of rockets and artillery pieces continue to rage along the commercial market's combat lines. Violent explosions are being heard now. The Army personnel in Al-Barbir are being alerted.

Chamber Headquarters Shelled

NC2209095088 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0948 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] We have just received the following: The periphery of the Al-Barbur area has been coming under shellfire since 1235 today. It has been reported that shells landed on the area, but there have been no reports on losses.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Deputies Headquarters in Al-Najmah Square is coming under similar shellfire. A member of the security forces has been wounded.

Clashes Along Contact Lines

NC2209094688 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0933 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The clashes on the contact lines from the Museum to the old markets have intensified. Violent clashes involving the use of automatic weapons and rockets are taking place on the Primo, Empire Movie Theater, and Sodeco combat lines in the capital. Artillery shells are falling on residential areas opposite the positions of the gunmen in West Beirut. It has been reported that some artillery shells are falling on the outskirts of Al-Ashrafiyah, and that a person has been wounded.

Cease-Fire Reached

NC2209102488 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1012 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The attacks on the free residential areas close to the contact lines in the capital have eased. These areas had been subjected to attack by automatic weapons and RPG-7's. However, some rocket and machinegun fire continues to be heard.

It has been learned that a cease-fire has been called for 1300. The Security Committee is trying to implement this cease-fire.

Gunmen Violate Cease-Fire

NC2209112088 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] At 1250 today, a 6th Brigade source announced the following: Units of the 6th Brigade in the commercial market and Ra's al-Nab' are coming under concentrated sniper fire, as well as artillery and mortar fire, for reasons known by everyone. The 6th Brigade units, however, continue to abide by the cease-fire and are not returning fire.

Meanwhile, a cease-fire was reached at 1300 following a series of contacts by various officials. However, the cease-fire has not yet been honored by the gunmen in East Beirut.

3 Killed in Clash

NC2209121788 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] A clash took place in the Al-Awza'i area [in West Beirut] at 1400 this afternoon, in which three persons were killed and several others were wounded. The implications of the incident are not yet known. According to security sources, an attempt was made to assassinate party officials in the abovementioned area. The security forces are dealing with the situation.

In another development, clashes ended in the commercial area at approximately 1400.

MENA Military Editor on Soviet Base at Tartus

NC2209113588 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1111 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Cairo, 22 Sep (MENA)—A MENA military editor has learned that the Soviet Union has obtained a base in the Mediterranean which will enable it to monitor events in the region.

This base became available after Syria offered the military facilities at the Syrian port of Tartus to the Soviet Union to serve the latter's interests in the region.

In his statement of 12 September, the Soviet Foreign Ministry official spokesman was more specific regarding the facilities at the Tartus base.

The spokesman emphasized that the Soviet Union has specific facilities including a repair workshop, a temporary quay, a storehouse, and a car park.

It is worth noting that Syria had granted facilities to the Soviet Union earlier in return for military support, including MiG-29 aircraft, surface-to-surface missiles, and Tupolev-126 warning aircraft to safeguard the Syrian defense system.

Al-Asad Receives Various Lebanese Officials

Talks With Al-Jumayyil

JN2109181988 Damascus Television Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Excerpts] Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil arrived in Damascus at 1330 today. [passage omitted]

Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Amin al-Jumayyil held a closed meeting at 1400. The talks revolved around the situation in Lebanon and the tasks facing the Lebanese—particularly the presidential elections and the need to conduct these elections as a standpoint for the national solution that will restore to the Lebanese homeland its security and independence and allow Lebanese citizens to live a normal life and try to rebuild Lebanon and achieve progress and prosperity.

The two presidents agreed on the importance of rendering the presidential elections in Lebanon a success. They agreed to exert all possible efforts to facilitate the holding of the elections, particularly since Lebanon's fate depends on these elections.

The president affirmed, during the talks, that Syria is with all the Lebanese, extends to them the hand of assistance and fraternity, and is always ready to work with them to safeguard Lebanon—its unity, independence, security and stability. [passage omitted]

Al-Jumayyil Departs

JN2109172688 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1715 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil left Damascus at 1815 today. At the head of those who saw him off at the airport was President Hafiz al-Asad.

He was also seen off by Prime Minister Muhmud al-Zu'bi and a number of ministers.

Meets With Franjiyah, Son

JN2109182588 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1815 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] At 1945 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received former Lebanese President Sulayman Franjiyah and his son Robert Franjiyah. The talks dealt with the situation in Lebanon.

Receives Mikha'il Dahir

JN2109204788 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2015 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] At 2100 today, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad met Lebanese Deputy Mikha'il Dahir. The talks dealt with the situation in Lebanon.

Sees Al-Husayni, Al-Huss

JN2109205988 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2015 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] At 2230 today, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received Husayn al-Husayni, speaker of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, and Dr Salim al-Huss, Lebanese prime minister.

The meeting was attended by Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

The talks dealt with the situation and developments in Lebanon in light of the presidential election, its importance, and its relationship to the fate of fraternal Lebanon.

Emphasis was put on the importance of holding the election and on focusing efforts to work for Lebanon's unity and independence and the security and safety of its citizens,

Vice President Receives French Delegation

JN1909105788 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1015 GMT 19 Sep 88

[Text] Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam received Gilbert Perol, director general of the French Foreign Ministry, and Alain Dejammet, director of the Middle East and North Africa Department.

Assistant Foreign Minister Yusuf Shakkur attended. The meeting revolved around the situation in Lebanon.

Afghanistan

Prime Minister Sharq Speaks at Kremlin Dinner

LD2109202489 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] We see this visit to the USSR as the government's most important first step taken in line with the firm desire of our peoples to develop and consolidate even further the long-standing friendship between our countries, Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Hasan Sharq said today at a dinner given for him in the Kremlin by the Soviet Government.

Our people know well, he continued, that the Soviet Union, contrary to what is claimed on this score by some people, seeks continuous and equal friendship with the entire Afghan nation, regardless of political sympathies or currents among the Afghans, and is a steadfast supporter of a free, independent, and nonaligned Afghanistan.

Speaking of the situation surrounding the country and the social, economic, and political difficulties encountered by the government on the domestic front, Muhammad Hasan Sharq said our compatriots, both those living in Afghanistan and those living abroad, hoped that with the signature of the Geneva Accords the external aspects of the Afghanistan problem would be settled and they would be able to remove the internal factors and contradictions that prompted the on-going devastating war.

He added with regret that since the agreements were signed and went into force, the Pakistani and U.S. sides have acted, and continue to act, stubbornly and persistently contrary to the commitments made in Geneva.

Seeing strict compliance with the Geneva Accords as the best way to prevent a flareup of tension and a catastrophe in the region, we declare, the Afghan prime minister said, that Pakistan's continuous evasion of the fulfillment of its obligations stemming from these agreements means, in fact, an escalation of the war and bloodshed for the innocent Muslim people of Afghanistan.

Describing this kind of conduct toward a neighboring country as unworthy of any civilized government, Muhammad Hasan Sharq expressed his hope that the new leadership of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan will honor the Geneva commitments in earnest.

In conclusion, the Afghan head of government said that the country and people are grateful to the Soviet Union for its disinterested cooperation which, he stressed, has played an invaluable and decisive role in every sphere of our people's life.

Spokesman Comments on Pakistani 'Propaganda'

LD2109214888 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] The spokesman of the Afghan Foreign Ministry in response to claims by the spokesman of the Pakistani Foreign Ministry in connection with assertions by refugees in Wursek Lakey and Sadeq to the delegation of the UN Good Offices Mission to Afghanistan and Pakistan [UNGOMAP] that Pakistani authorities do not prevent them from returning says:

This is not the first time the Pakistani authorities have distorted the assessments of the UN mission and used them as ammunition in the war of words against the Republic of Afghanistan to capture public opinion.

The fact is that Pakistan, in contravention of the Geneva agreements, creates impediments to the work of UNGOMAP. The Pakistanis block the free movement of the mission by imposing on it requirements for prior permission for visits to certain areas.

These areas are extensively used for the dispatching of weapons and ammunition and for large weapons depots of the opposition, but they use the pretext that tribal conflagrations in the areas render them unsafe.

Whenever the mission receives a note from the Republic of Afghanistan on violations of the Geneva agreements and wants to inspect the areas, Pakistan, under different pretexts, delays the inspection by the mission for 2 or 3 weeks.

This gives Pakistan sufficient time to remove stockpiled arms from the target area to another place or to change a military training camp to a school. Likewise, for inspections of the camps, fabricated scenes are used and a number of imprisoned people are introduced as the spokesmen of the refugees.

They repeat whatever is dictated to them by the Pakistani authorities. A large number of the refugees, who live in utterly repressive conditions, cannot express their wish to return home for fear of the extremists' executioners.

The Geneva agreements put serious obligations on the signatories concerning the return of the refugees. A joint commission should be set up to ensure the regular and peaceful return of the refugees.

Regrettably, Pakistan, which exploits the existence of the refugees on its soil for political and economic purposes, attempts to prevent the establishment of such a commission and block the return of the refugees.

Sometimes the authorities resort to the creation of fear among the refugees and claim that the refugee return routes are all mined and sometimes they employ beatings and even killings by their militia and extremist elements to impede the return of the refugees.

It should be mentioned that in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva agreements, Instrument IV, a permanent post should be set up to curtail violations.

The Afghan side has carried out full cooperation for the setting up of such posts and right now such posts are set up at points where the mission has requested them.

However, it is to be said with regret that Pakistan has not taken the slightest action in this direction. Despite UN efforts and repeated suggestions by the Afghan side, 4 months have elapsed since the coming into force of the accord and not even one post has yet been set up in Pakistan.

We once again demand that Pakistan refrain from any irresponsible propaganda and instead fulfill its obligations in keeping with the Geneva agreements.

AFP: Rebels Attack Qandahar Airport 17 Sep

BK2109151488 Hong Kong AFP in English 1505 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Islamabad, Sept 21 (AFP)—Afghan rebels blew up three planes, a helicopter, and two ammunition depots and killed ten soldiers in an attack on Qandahar airport Saturday [17 September], resistance sources said Wednesday.

A transport plane, a helicopter and two jets were destroyed while two ammunition depots, a food storage facility and a troops logistic centre at the airport were set ablaze, they said.

The sources said the rebels carried out the attack with the aid of a new type of rocket with a range of 32 kilometers (20 miles).

The attack was mounted from Mel located near Takhta Pul, which the rebels captured recently, they said. [placenames as received]

The guerrillas fired several rounds of super-accurate "Saphie" [name as received] rockets during the night between Saturday and Sunday, they said.

A helicopter repair workshop was also set on fire in the attack, which resistance sources said was one of the biggest operations against the airport in almost nine years of war.

The resistance sources said 10 Afghan government soldiers were killed while 13 tanks and military vehicles were also gutted as the ensuing fire engulfed a large area.

The attacks severely damaged the terminal building, a VIP lounge and a runway, they said.

The rebel barrages also caused extensive damage to a military hospital set up at the facility, they said.

Qandahar airport is the only remaining Soviet-Afghan government stronghold in the troubled southeastern Afghan province, which rebel guerrillas want to capture and declare the base of a future resistance government.

The rebels' position strengthened further with the fall of the garrison town of Spin Buldak close to the Pakistani border earlier this month, when government militia surrendered to the mujahidin.

The rebel sources said Afghan Government Commander Esmatullah Muslim [name as received] has returned to Qandahar as chief of the Southern Zone comprising Qandahar, Helmand, Zabol and Oruzgan.

The resistance sources said they suspect the legendary commander has been assigned to recapture Spin Buldak, as he is equipped with fresh troops.

Islamabad Reports Recent Mujahidin Operations

BK2209082788 Islamabad Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] In Afghanistan, mujahidin are reported to have destroyed a helicopter gunship of the Kabul regime in Balkh Province. Ten Kabul regime troops including pilot of the helicopter were killed when it caught fire after being hit by a rocket.

Another report says the mujahidin besieged subdivisional town of (Charam) after capturing the military garrison of Kashan and Baharak in Badakshan Province. There are also reports of heavy fighting between the mujahidin and Kabul regime troops in the provinces of Samangan, Qonduz, Nangarhar, and Paktia.

India

Defamation Bill Withdrawn; Issue 'Remains'

BK2209130288 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The government has decided not to make the defamation bill into a law. In a statement issued in New Delhi today, the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, said this has been done to facilitate a wider and fuller national debate on the issue.

He said the bill was brought in Parliament to protect the individual from defamatory remarks and actions and to redress an aggrieved person adequately and in time. It sought to codify the existing law on the subject and to take it forward in some areas.

Mr Gandhi said defamation, as defined in the bill, is not an issue between the government and the press, but between a person aggrieved and a person accused.

The prime minister's statement reaffirms that a free press is an integral part of the inner strength and dynamism of our democracy. Without a free press there can

be no democracy. The imperishable values of our freedom struggle have gone to the making of the press in India. We uphold this legacy, we should continue to do so. Our commitment to the freedom of the press is total.

The government has no intention of curbing in any way the freedom of the press. The statement says the freedom and rights of the individual are equally sacred. It is this that makes the issue of defamation a serious issue. The bill has sought to resolve this issue in accordance with the basic principles of our Constitution and the laws. It has, however, aroused misapprehensions and misgivings in the press and some sections of the public.

We, therefore, offered an unconditional dialogue on the subject. Some organizations and individuals have responded.

However, there should be a wider and fuller national debate. To facilitate such a debate, the government has decided not to press the bill into law.

However, Mr Gandhi said, the issue of defamation remains. The prime minister has expressed the hope that concerned citizens, jurists, and the media will participate in the debate on the issue. In course of time, government may, if necessary, create a suitable forum to carry forward the dialogue in a spirit of understanding and cooperation, the statement added.

Pakistani Defense Secretary Meets K.C. Pant

BK2209130588 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The Pakistan defense secretary, Ijlal Haider Zaidi, called on the defense minister, Mr K.C. Pant, in New Delhi today.

Mr Zaidi arrived in the capital this afternoon to take part in the secretary-level talks on the Siachen issue between India and Pakistan beginning tomorrow.

Chief Minister: Pakistan Behind Kashmir Violence

BK2109155888 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] The Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, says his government has sufficient proof to believe that incidents of bomb explosions and other disruptive activities in the state were part of a scheme executed by some groups of youths trained in Pakistan.

Talking to our correspondent Ajit Singh in Jammu, Dr Abdullah said besides sophisticated weapons, some subversive literature has been recovered from these infiltrators. He said their interrogation revealed that they planned to kill some senior political leaders and government officers.

Most of these trained terrorists have been nabbed, he added.

Attempt by 'Terrorists' To Enter Delhi Fails

BK2209034488 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] Two terrorists, trying to infiltrate into the capital, failed in their attempt yesterday when one of the two bombs they were carrying went off at the Ghaziabad-Delhi border.

The police commissioner, Mr Vijay Karan, said one of the two youths was seriously injured and removed to a hospital. The other ran away.

Iran

Minesweeping Operations Begin in Gulf

NC2209043988 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The Central News Unit reports that simultaneous with the commencement of week of sacared defense, the Navy of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran commenced minesweeping operations in the international waters of the Persian Gulf early this morning. These operations are being conducted on a vast scale and taking place in the northern and southern areas of the Persian Gulf.

Dozens of ships, air units, and special teams of frogmen are participating in these operations, which are being carried out to ensure the safety of free navigation in the Persian Gulf.

'Secret Agreement' Reached on Hostages' Release

PM2109142788 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 21-27 Sep 88 p 8

[Unattributed report: "U.S.-Iranian Agreement Providing for Release of Hostages Before Elections"]

[Text] Informed sources in Beirut have revealed that the release of West German hostage Rudolf Cordes was a first step in the process of releasing a number of foreign hostages, particularly the Americans, before the U.S. elections in the fall.

AL-MAJALLAH has learned that at a meeting held in Amsterdam and attended by U.S. and Iranian representatives, some points of understanding were reached on certain political and security matters for the next phase. The matter of resolving the question of the release of foreign hostages held in Lebanon figured prominently in that.

The sources said that the release of West German national Cordes was part of a plan which covers the release, at a later stage, of the foreign hostages, particularly British Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite and some U.S. hostages in accordance with the secret agreement concluded between Washington and Tehran.

Sacred Defense Week Begins; Officials Interviewed

Rafsanjani on '8-Year War'

LD2109214688 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1655 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Interview with Majlis Speaker 'Ali Hashemi-Rafsanjani in Tehran on 20 September—recorded]

[Text] [Unidentified correspondent] Mr Rafsanjani, tomorrow is the first day of Sacred Defense Week. We are holding this week 8 years after the sacred defense and warfare [words indistinct]. What is your assessment of this 8-year war?

[Rafsanjani] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Of course war is destructive, especially in our time when war is fought with destructive Western weapons. It results in destruction, casualties, and [word indistinct]. As I stated, some 133,000 of our best children were lost. Of course, they achieved their own status; they joined their beloved. But we have lost them. The injured, those suffering (?agonies), [words indistinct] the cost of war; these are all resulting from the war.

Also, there are other important spiritual effects which include such factors as building our nation and reinforcing our spiritual strength. These were the effects that have affected our dear citizens, the whole society. These are great effects. Moreover, the great part of our technical advancements have been achieved due to the war.

As defenders, for us the entire operation was successful. We succeeded, throughout the war, in neutralizing the danger that was directed by global infidelity against our country's Islamic revolution. Today our country is standing steadfast and strong. The revolution continues along its path. By the admission of friend and foe, the Islamic revolution and the Islamic Republic have been stabilized with their own original aspirations. Our enemies have been routed.

Those who started the war will find it difficult to reply to this question. That is, Iraq today must explain what it has achieved from the war. We have no responsibility to answer such a question because we did not start the war—we were defending ourselves. Those who started the war must now be accountable for the hundreds of thousands of people killed, the destruction, the cost, the debts incurred, and the dependence they created for themselves. These are the ones who must asses whether they suffered losses or made profits. Even those who incited Iraq to attack, or assisted her—in fact they all entertained the objective of oppressing the revolution—failed to achieve success.

Of course we raised slogans midway throughout the war—such as calling for the downfall of the Saddam Husayn regime and his trial as well as the attainment of our own rights. We thought that we could reach these targets through military pressure. We have not yet achieved these objectives. But the path we have now chosen is not a worthless path; we believe that through this path, too, we can achieve our objectives. If the resolution is implemented correctly, as we have been promised, we may well attain the same objectives. In any event, we have attained the objective of defending our revolution as it was set—at a dear cost.

[Correspondent] As we have heard, Iran has recently announced the number of martyrs of the imposed war. Foreign news agencies have been speculating about whether the figure is correct or not. What is your explanation?

[Rafsanjani] Well, according to them, Iran has hundreds of thousands of martyrs. These were the figures they had been announcing to their own people a thousand times over in the press and radio. However, we used to say constantly that we would make no declarations concerning the number of war casualties—indeed, nobody at war would do so. We used to say that we would announce the figure later, knowing that one day they would have to explain it to their readers and listeners.

Well, in a country where people like to fight so freely—where the families of the martyrs and the people are aware of the details of the war, in addition to the Army, the IRGC, and the mobilization corps who know about it—it is not possible to say something untrue to the people. Is it possible? Each one of them has a file and there is evidence.

[Correspondent] Now that we are approaching the talks, will Iran take part in the talks or not? Iraq has recently announced through Tariq 'Aziz that they would not go to New York. Do you see any success for Iran in the Geneva talks?

[Rafsanjani] First of all, there has been no progress in the negotiations. We are still in the initial stages; the first clause of the resolution has not yet been implemented. As to whether we have achieved success or not, well it makes no difference to us whether talks are held in Geneva, New York, or somewhere else. We have something legitimate to say, and we can say it anywhere. It was the secretary general who, because of the general sessions of the United Nations, wanted us all to go to New York to enable him to supervise the talks. Of course, the personal supervision of the secretary general would have a positive impact on the progress of the talks. For that reason, it is preferable that they be held in New York.

However, we have no objection to Geneva. Whether or not any future progress will be made, naturally depends on the sincerity of the two sides. We are serious. But the Iraqis have not yet shown any sincerity. They constantly raise preconditions or irrelevant issues. But because we still attach importance to the results of the talks, we take the talks seriously..

[Correspondent] Tariq 'Aziz has recently announced that, in continuation of the preconditions they attach to the talks, one of the main issues between Iran and Iraq is that of the Arvand River—the dredging and such things. If they intend to put us under pressure then do we have something to resort to? In what direction are the talks moving with respect to the Arvand River?

[Rafsanjani] This is some sort of excuse; otherwise, the dredging of the Arvand River is a demand for both of us—the Iraqis and ourselves. It is a border river which we and the Iraqis share. If there is peace and it is safe, then the sooner it is dredged, the better for both sides. Then the ports will be active and other benefits will ensue for both of us—Iran and Iraq. Therefore, we want the dredging of the Arvand River and, like the Iraqis, we want it to be done soon.

But the point is that, firstly, now is not the time to raise this issue. Why did the Iraqis raise it now? They could have raised it 10 days later, after the troop withdrawal had been achieved, and when we could begin to free the prisoners. That would have been the appropriate time for them to raise this issue. Secondly, there is the question of the quality of dredging. In the 1975 Algiers agreement, the dredging of the Avand River was specifically detailed. The two sides have signed it and it has been approved. Now Iraq may intend—of course, we do not know how serious it is—to gain a concession concerning the Arvand River and abrogate the 1975 agreement.

But we are standing firm. We are not prepared to accept any form of tampering with this agreement—even at the cost of starting the war. Because this is the very same issue over which the war was, apparently, started. Of course, when they started the war, this could have been a pretext, not an objective, for they were in league with global infidelity, aiming at destroying the revolution altogether.

They wanted to capture Khuzestan and divide Iran, but the Arvand River was included in these objectives. Now they think that they need to give something to the people of Iraq. But I do not think they are serious about it. They know that Iran will most definitely never accept such a thing. As a result, the situation will return to a position where they will be forced to knock on all doors asking us to start the talks.

[Correspondent] You know that Saddam Husayn has said that Iraq is even ready to change the course of the Shatt Al'Arab or Arvand River. Why does he talk in such a fashion?

[Rafsanjani] The question seems absurd. It is something that lacks a correct backing. They either have their own domestic problems or it is a military deception that they have raised. Otherwise, they know that they cannot achieve anything important in this way and that the task is a very difficult one. The overall position of the question is very important. There are other issues which, for the time being, we will not comment further on, because we do not consider them to be very serious. In any event it is not clear to us why they have raised the issue. If we ever feel that this issue is serious, we will have our say.

[Correspondent] After Iran's acceptance of the resolution, we saw Iraq resort to the chemical bombing of the Kurdish areas in the north of that country. This has caused a number of the Kurds to flee and take refuge in neighboring countries, including Iran. What is Iran's position on this matter?

[Rafsanjani] Naturally we are against it. Even if we were not at war with Iraq, even if there were no neighborly or Islamic considerations—such as the treatment of certain groups like the Kurds, who for many years have been wronged in Iraq and who suffer from banishment—the use of chemical weapons is a very criminal and inhuman act. The use of any weapon against the people of a country is basically unacceptable, let alone the use of forbidden chemical weapons. We shall not refrain from giving what assistance we can to alleviate the pains and sufferings of the Kurdish people.

[Correspondent] One of the regional issues is the Lebanese elections which, after numerous delays, is about to take place tomorrow. Does Iran have a special position on this matter?

[Rafsanjani] Our position on Lebanon is for a just, democratic system coming into existence there. Like other free countries of the world, whatever the majority of the Lebanese people want, should be carried out. The fact that they distribute the posts on the basis of a tradition imposed by world arrogance—that the presidency should belong to such and such, the premiership should belong to such and such, and the speaker of the parliament should be from this or that group—these are imposed, imported ideas. Of course, we should not interfere from afar in the domestic affairs of Lebanon as such.

Our view is that if the people could take part in elections and elect whoever they wished as president, the government would then be formed on the basis of democratic principles, majority rule—that would be correct. The Americans go there from another part of the world, make plans and impose something on the people. I do not think that any freedom-loving individual can accept such things—for somebody from the United States to go that country and say who should be appointed and who should not be.

[Correspondent] One of the very important issues in Iran after the acceptance of the resolution is reconstruction and its various dimensions. His Holiness the Imam made certain remarks, saying that the Assembly Deciding the Expediency should approve a plan regarding this matter. Have any actions been taken in fulfillment of His Holiness the Imam's views; and what are the views of the assembly on this matter?

[Rafsanjani] By the Assembly for Deciding the Expediency [shora-ye tashkhis-e maslahat] is not meant the assembly which had been appointed in the past—the assembly to decide the differences between the Council of Guardians and the majlis on other issues. The imam said that the heads of the three powers and the prime minister should form a body to decide on the policies regarding reconstruction. We have asked the government, the Planning and Budget Committee of the Majlis, and experts from other sectors to convey their views on the reconstruction policy—priorities, the sources of income, and the like.

The first response we received is the view expressed by the national reconstruction headquarters specifying the priority of the reconstruction of the places damaged as a result of the war, and the war-affected provinces, clarifying the policies, costs, and responsibilities. This has been placed on the agenda of work we should investigate. We have also asked the views of the deputies from the war-affected provinces. The deputies from Khuzestan have expressed their views, and others will do the same.

Progressively, the issues of reconstruction will be discussed. Reconstruction does not just mean rebuilding the places which have been destroyed, but also concerns the general reconstruction of the country. We also have two or three meetings every week; and these issues are raised there, and we discuss them with experts and reach the final decisions.

[Correspondent] One of the problems associated with this matter is its economic dimensions, and the choice of open-door or closed economic policies. What are the views on this matter?

[Rafsanjani] No decision has been made yet on this matter. There are certain views. What is certain is that in these policies the aspirations of the revolution, for which we staged the revolution, will be regarded as the main principles; and the interests of the revolution, the needs of the people, and the needs of the country will be taken into consideration. We will choose financial sources and reconstruction resources on the basis of the preservation of our principles. Those policies which enable us to achieve the main goals of the revolution and the independence and freedom of the Islamic Republic, those will be chosen.

[Correspondent] Tomorrow is the first day of the Holy Defense Week. If you have a message for the Armed Forces, please give it.

[Rafsanjani] Our Armed Forces worked very hard in the past 10 years. We placed the greatest burden of the revolution on the shoulders of the Armed Forces. In the past few years, due to our isolation in the world, we were not able to equip our forces appropriately and take good care of them. They performed their great duty with sacrifice and devotion. I express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to those beloved ones. What I wish to tell them is that, as you see, our enemies have not yet surrendered. Even with little hope, they are still trying to gain some concessions from the Islamic Republic. This revolution is not about making concessions.

The revolution always makes demands on the reactionaries and those who have a counterrevolutionary nature. It will never make concessions to them. Our weapon in this is our Armed Forces and our self-sacrificing people who are on the scene. We should be prepared. The moment we are negligent—if we think that the war has ended and it is time to return to our homes and rest—the enemy will deliver its blow. Therefore, we should still regard ourselves as being in a state of war.

Of course, our former instructions remain the same. Along the lines you should not take the first step; you should not inflict any harm upon the Iraqis unless they initiate an action. In that case, you have the right of self-defense. As long as the discussions are continuing, and as long as the peace talks have not been terminated, we will observe the conditions. We pray that these discussions will never end until they achieve their results. We should be prepared so that if the enemy decides not to give in to justice, then we will perform our duty in achieving our rights.

[Correspondent] Thank you.

Jalali on 'Self-Sufficiency'

NC2209062188 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The minister of defense attended a news conference on Sacred Defense Week.

The Central News Unit reports that during this interview, Brigadier-General Jalali pointed to the nation's comprehensive participation in the 8 years of sacred defense—a manifestation of the immense support for the Armed Forces. He then referred to self-sufficiency in the Armed Forces, and said: Self-sufficiency in the triple forces has reached such an extent that most of the Armed Forces' needs are being met. Alterations were made on purchased arms and major problems of the war were solved.

As for the defense industries, where the issue of self-sufficiency is much more important, extensive steps have been made through the use of the country's capabilities.

Referring to research in the defense industries, the defense minister said: Research is the foundation of progress in the defense industries. We have research branches in all three forces. The government has allocated a special budget for each of these forces. The main reason for our success in the missile industries is the use of the research branch of the defense industries, where Defense Ministry experts and committed experts from the universities are employed.

On reconstruction in the Armed Forces, the defense minister said: Great priority has been given to the reconstruction of the Armed Forces and the IRGC. The Armed Forces should be strengthened. Of course, this does not mean strengthening in order to unleash aggression against anyone, but to prevent possible aggression against us and to defend the achievements that our people fought for.

Musavi Interviewed

NC2209055188 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Telephone interview with Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi, speaking from unknown venue, by unidentified correspondent of the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran—live]

[Text] [Unidentified correspondent] Your Excellency, prime minister: How are you?

[Musavi] Fine, thank you very much.

[Correspondent] I am talking to you from this morning's newscast of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mr Musavi, today we are marking the 8th anniversary of sacred defense against plots by world arrogance at a time when conditions are different from what they were in the past. As the prime minister of our Islamic homeland, how do you assess this new situation?

[Musavi] In the name of God, the Almighty, the Merciful. I believe that we are marking this week as Sacred Defense Week at a time when we actually have inflicted deadly blows on our enemies and have proved that no force nor power can plot or aggress against us and escape safely. We foiled the enemy's operations and today, more than ever before, we should think of the extensive plans that our enemy had in mind in relation to the Persian Gulf, Khuzestan, and the Islamic Republic's system in general, under the aegis of the arrogant powers.

They intended to crush this at the outset of the revolution. We also are leading this war to its conclusion without having given into any big powers' blackmail even though the pressures on us were great. We saw how all the powers of the East and West united against us and inflicted pressure on us. They tried to establish contact with us and force us to undertake a commitment. However, we rejected any commitment or blackmail.

At the same time, we can remember, during this week, how the 8 years of strong resistance by our nation, our combatants and our system in general, did not lead us into [word indistinct] and into dependence on big powers. Even though the country is experiencing economic difficulties today—and I do not deny these—we, nevertheless, have a pure, clean, and ready ground in front of us which will allow us to solve these problems, God willing. Also, we should bear in mind something which is more important than all these; namely, we are (?marking the 8 years) of this war after having strongly defended the values, achievements, and ideals of the Islamic revolution.

These 8 years have strengthened these ideals and objectives, and it deepened the Islamic revolution in our country and throughout the world. This is my assessment as far as domestic affairs are concerned. As for foreign affairs, the Islamic revolution actually was stabilized and was identified with the lives of Muslims. The rising of all the Muslims in Islamic society today stems from this very resistance of our brave men, combatants, and martyrs, who made such an impact in the world.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much, Mr Musavi. Since today has been named the day of the Armed Forces and this is the 1st week of the epic of sacred defense, what is Your Excellency's view on the role of these forces during the 8 years of sacred defense? What is your view of the duties of these forces in the future?

[Musavi] These forces were formed through experience, blood, fire, and war. They actually were formed during this sacared defense. They are filled with goodness and good Islamic values. They were formed out of the confrontation between Islam and arrogance, and amid difficulties and calamities. Thus, they are characterized by strength, harmony, and experience, the degree to which may not exist in the world today. If we apply the characteristic of Islamic [word indistinct] to them, they undoubtedly are rare forces. This is why we should regard these forces as the reserve forces of the worldwide Islamic revolution and support them.

They have both a deterrent role—with regard to any aggression that may be unleashed by foreigners and arrogant powers against us—and a defensive role with regard to the values of our Islamic revolution. We should look at the dear martyrs that we have sacrificed and at the families of the martyrs and the combatants. We will not see a simple face, but one filled with love, faith, and epic affection for the leadership of the revolution and for Islam.

This is what our Armed Forces are. They are considered the guardians of Islam. Their role in the future will be to preserve the borders of Islamic belief and our Islamic homeland. Looking beyond borders as far as this Islamic belief is concerned, and defending the borders of the country, should be the duties of the Armed Forces, God willing. The nation, too, will strongly support them. A

strong bond exists between our combatant forces and our nation, which actually is the true asset for the future growth of these forces, God willing.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for this telephone conversation.

[Musavi] I thank you, too.

[Correspondent] Goodbye.

[Musavi] Goodbye.

Armed Forces Parade on 1st Day of Defense Week
NC2209043588 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 22 Sep 88

[Text] The ceremony marking the week of the epic of the sacred defense simultaneous with the anniversary of the Iraqi regime's aggression against the Islamic homeland will be held at Tehran's Azadi Square at 0800 today [0430 GMT] with a parade by the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The headquarters for the marking of the sacred defense has issued a statement calling on the people to attend the parade by the Armed Forces in order to express their respect for the selflessness and devotion of the combatants of Islam throughout the 8 years of epical defense and in order to make this ceremony even more spectacular.

The statement says that the parade by the Armed Forces on the 1st day of the Sacred Defense Week manifests the readiness of the combatants of Islam to confront the enemies and emphasizes the need for each member of the nation to maintain combat preparedness.

Khamene'i Holds Cabinet Meeting; Musavi Comments
LD2109141688 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] The cabinet met today in the presence of President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i. The new cabinet ministers participated. At this meeting, Khamene'i congratulated members of the cabinet and the prime minister for having received votes of confidence from Majlis and expressed the hope that the new cabinet, which has gained experience and matured, may be able to carry the huge burden of the country's reconstruction and realize its goals with the special courage needed during the era of reconstruction and with all-round efforts. He expressed his hopes that this will be achieved under postwar conditions when there are no major obstacles in the way.

The president also paid tribute to Sacred Defense Week and said: This week, which is a reminder of a great event and the achievement of greater results in the revolution of our nation, will never be forgotten by our people. Khamene'i added: Two issues are important regarding our nation's defense and they should receive attention during this week. One of the issues is the emergence of an independent and Islamic Revolution. Arrogant nations throughout the world should know that a nation can stand steadfast and sacrifice so that a revolution, independent of and is indeed indifferent to the West and East, may be able to survive. The second issue is the greatness of the defense which our nation has carried and is carrying out, defending itself and defending its aspirations.

The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council compared the defense capabilities and conditions of the country during the early days of the war to the time when the cease-fire was accepted and said: The miracle that has occured today is that our country, after 8 years of war, has been able to defend itself proudly and in an outstanding manner in the face of a variety of hostile acts by the powers and superpowers and is prepared to enter the next stages of defense with a capacity and power 10 times greater than it possessed in the past. Khamene'i stressed: Our good standing and strength today, which has been the cause of our pride, is due to the unique power and courage of the leader of the revolution, in addition to the Islamic and popular nature of the revolution. This is a great lesson for us and for coming generations.

At the end of the cabinet meeting today Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi was interviewed by our correspondent:

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Mr Musavi, the cabinet met today with the participation of new ministers and the attendence of President Khamene'i. Would you please tell us what are the effects of fresh and new ideas on the executive?

[Musavi] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Today we held the first meeting of the cabinet after receiving the vote of confidence. We have five new faces. Our brother Zangeneh, who was in the Construction Jihad Ministry, has now been appointed to the Energy Ministry. As it happened, the esteemed president mentioned the new cabinet at the start of the meeting and provided some guidelines which the cabinet will certainly follow. In general, there is freedom under our system in the votes cast by the respected deputies and a Majlis that has been elected by the people. When some brothers come and go, there is a certain amount of change and turmoil with the arrival and influence of new ideas in the work process.

We express appreciation and praise and thank the brothers who have held these posts and have given us much service during the period of the war in very difficult times and under very difficult conditions. It is natural that the Government of the Islamic Republic and the brothers who serve in some posts do not have to serve in these posts forever. What is good about our system is that they bring certain viewpoints and leave other viewpoints behind with the result that our government benefits from a veriety of personnel with a variety of ideas.

As to the policies of the government, these will of course be policies emanating from the messages and guidelines and opinions of his holiness, the imam. The government is the emulator of the esteemed imam and a strong follower of his viewpoints. We are also inspired by the imam's guidelines and advice in our fundamental post-war policies. In addition, each of the brothers who have come and who gained experience in the ministries during the war, while benefitting from the so-called existing strong management expertise, naturally make use of other expertise resulting in fresh approaches to issues and new ideas in planning.

From the point of view of executive methods and general policies, general policies are based on our values and religion and these values will remain and will be upheld as strongly and firmly as in the past.

[Correspondent] Mr Musavi, would you please tell us what kinds of issues were raised in relation to the cabinet's agenda?

[Musavi] Today, fortunately, we held a discussion on cultural issues. The Islamic Revolution is a revolution based on the culture and the development of culture, a cultural revolution. Our dear brother Khatami presented a report, then other brothers in the cabinet talked about this subject. This issue was discussed along with a tribute paid to the services and the very meaningful and prolific works of Shahriyar, the great poet of our country. It has been decided to name a university course after him. Salamati is charged with the duty of honoring Shahriyar's name at the University of Tehran.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much.

[Musavi] Not at all. [end recording]

Jalali Outlines Defense Industry Progress

LD2109183788 Tehran IRNA in English 1825 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Tehran, Sept. 21, IRNA—Defence Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Hoseyn Jalali today outlined progress made in defence industries.

Manufacture of some spare parts for tanks, Howitzers and other weapons used by the ground forces, manufacture of the first tugboat by the Navy, manufacture of the first plane by the Air Force and the first helicopter by defence industries—all without foreign assistance—reveals the ingenuity of Iranian experts, he told a press conference.

Brigadier Jalali ruled out any employment of foreign experts for rebuilding of the Iranian Armed Forces, and said if necessary, Iran will only use foreign experiences and technology to beef up the country's defence power. [sentence as heard]

Iran is not only self-sufficient in the manufacture of light weapons and munitions, but is also capable of exporting them, the minister said.

Noting that several production phases will become operational in the defence industries during the eighth anniversary of the sacred defence (22-28 September), Jalali said the industries last year went on the production line in missiles including their sophisticated mechanism, electronics and communication components.

Romanian Minister Confers With Budget Minister

LD2109150988 Tehran IRNA in English 1445 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Tehran, Sept. 21, IRNA—Romanian Minister of Machine Building Industry [title as received] Radu Paunesco conferred with Minister of Plan and Budget Mas'ud Roghani Zanjani Tuesday.

Zanjani said at the meeting that mutual cooperation between Iran and Romania especially in the fields of industry, agriculture, energy, oil and petrochemical industry and refinery should be further expand. He called on the Romanian minister to eliminate existing banking and trade inadequacies so that the two sides could achieve the target set in the letter of understanding.

In response, Paunesco said some Iranian industries enjoy high technical quality. "I believe there are ample grounds for cooperation," he added.

Romania is prepared to cooperate with Iran in heavy industries, manufacture of tractors and tryes, cellulose paper, aluminium and shipyard industries.

Paunesco, who was in Iran for the 14th International trade fair left for Romania today morning.

Departs 21 Sep

LD2109063488 Tehran IRNA in English 0515 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Text] Tehran, Sept, 21, IRNA—Romanian Minister of Machine Building Industry Radu Paunescu left Tehran Wednesday morning at the conclusion of a two-day visit and talks with Iranian officials on expansion of Tehran-Bucharest relations. While in Iran Paunescu also visited the 14th Tehran International Trade Fair and also announced readiness of his country to assist Iran in its post-war reconstruction.

In a brief interview with IRNA at the airport before departure, Paunescu described the talks as productive and added that Romanian experts will remain in Tehran to follow up talks with Iranian officials until attaining the final results. He said he informed Iran that his country was ready to cooperate in the fields of agro-industry, construction, aviation and alumninum industries.

Bulgaria's Khristov Meets With Mines Minister
LD2009172288 Tehran IRNA in English 1643 GMT 20 Sep 88

[Text] Tehran, Sept 20, IRNA—Bulgarian Foreign Trade Minister Khristo Khristov conferred with Mines and Metals Minister Mohammad Reza Ayatollahi here today. Stressing expansion of Tehran-Sofia political and economic cooperation, the two sides exchanged views on goods the two countries can export to each other

Khristov also discussed mutual commerical and banking relations between Iran and Bulgaria with Governor of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran Majid Qasemi in a meeting here on the same day.

Ethiopian Trade Minister Meets Oil Official
LD2009002588 Tehran IRNA in English 1903 GMT 19 Sep 88

[Text] Tehran, Sept. 19, IRNA—Ethiopian Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Getachew Tadesse discussed Tehran-Addis Ababa oil cooperation with Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs Hoseyn Kazempur-Ardabili here today. The two sides also exchanged views on transfer of technological knowhow and training of Ethiopian personnel in Iran, and agreed on despatch of an Ethiopian expert team to Iran.

Meanwhile, Tadesse also conferred with deputy health minister in a separate meeting here today and was informed on Iran's progress in pharmaceutical projects and campaign against infantile diseases. Tadesse heading a delegation is currently here to visit the 14th Tehran international Trade Fair (12-23 September).

Italian Trade Official Meets With Ayatollahi
LD2109004488 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 20 Sep 88

[Text] The Italian deputy foreign trade minister met and conferred this morning with Mines and Metals Minister Ayatollahi. According to a Central News Unit report, during this meeting the two sides expressed hope for expanding economic and commercial relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Italy. They stressed the need to complete the Mubarekeh steel project, some parts of which are being built by Italian firms.

Commentary Assails New U.S. Stance on Iraq
LD2109152388 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1106 GMT 21 Sep 88

[Station commentary: "The Change in U.S. Stance on Iraq's Use of Chemical Weapons"]

[Excerpts] At a time when the Iraqi Kurds, victims of genocide and homelessness as a result of the Iraqi regime's extensive use of chemical weapons are still awaiting resolute action by the international community to end this genocide, the U.S. State Department has claimed that the Iraqi regime has stopped using chemical weapons in its domestic and international conflicts. The U.S. State Department, while considering Tariq 'Aziz remarks last Saturday as positive, stated that 'Aziz had stressed in his remarks that Iraq respects all clauses and provisions of international law—such as the Geneva protocol of 1925 prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, as that it is in agreement with this protocol.

The U.S. Administration has adopted this new stance at a time when, due to Iraq's repeated use of chemical weapons which peaked during the use of these weapons against the Kurds of that country, the worry that the international ban on the use of these weapons may be ignored in wars between different countries has surfaced.

This reaction, which may be justifiable within the framework of preserving American interests and the wheeling and dealing that usually takes place between the superpowers, has taken place when Tariq 'Aziz had clearly confessed to his country's use of chemical weapons during its war against Iran. This confession took place 2 and ½ months ago when Iraq was pressured by the Security Council over its use of chemical weapons.

That the Reagan administration interprets the Iraqi foreign minister's remarks as meaning that the Baghdad regime will stop using chemical weapons in its domestic and international conflicts reveals that the U.S. Administation and its Western allies, by periodically condemning Iraq for using chemical weapons as well as simultaneously releasing propaganda such as this instance, were merely attempting to exonerate themselves from the charge that they have been indiffeent about the use of chemical weapons.

The diverging viewpoints within the American ruling circle about responding to Iraq's use of chemical weapons has revealed that the White House dwellers prefer preserving their strategic interests in the Middle East and Iraq over the recommendations of the Senate. The U.S. Senate sought to impose sanctions against the Iraqi regime, but the Reagan Administration refused to implement these sanctions.

Given the newly-created circumstances in the region, political observers believe the United States is seeking to expand its influence in the region and, viewing Iraq strategically and despite widespread international condemnation of Iraq, the United States will justify its change of stance because of the support of the Arab reaction for the Iraqi regime. The Arab reaction guarantees the safeguarding of the U.S. imperialism's vital interests.

The same observers, given the lack of relations between Iran and the United States, believe that U.S. companies are hopeful that they will play an important role in the postwar reconstruction of Iraq. Thus Washington, by changing its stance on the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi regime, is trying to use this opportunity to expand its political and economic influence in Iraq and the region as a whole. [passage omitted]

In any case, the new U.S. stance, adopted when world public opinion and governments are still expressing deep concern about the extensive chemical attacks of the Iraqi regime against the Kurds of that country, reveals the U.S. expansionist aims and objectives.

Briefs

Annual Shipping Figures Cited

Tehran, Sept. 20, IRNA—The cargo fleet of the Islamic Republic Shipping Company (IRSC) carried 11,120,000 tons of goods in 1987, Managing Director Mohammad Hoseyn Dajmar said here Tuesday. IRSC now owns 72 oceangoing ships with a total tonnage of 2,120,000, said Dajmar, adding that the figure can increase to 2,308,000 tons if other ships owned by "Irano-Indian" and "Val-Fajr-8" shipping companies, affiliated to IRSC, are taken into account. [Excerpts] [*LD2109002588 Tehran IRNA in English 1749 GMT 20 Sep 88*]